

International Theological Seminary

**The Son of Man in the Context of Daniel 7 and Mark's Gospel and the
Implication on the Chinese Church**

A Thesis Presented to the Faculty of the

International Theological Seminary

In Partial Fulfillment of the Requirements for the Degree

Master of Theology

by

Haiping Yan

Los Angeles, California

May 2021

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Thesis Approval

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Chairman: _____

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Abstract

When I was a young girl, I was proud of myself as a Chinese, because I thought China was the best country in the world. And then I was disappointed for some time because I saw the reality was not the same as I was educated. But now, I am proud of myself as a Chinese again, because I know God loves the Chinese people and he has a plan for me to be a Chinese minister.

The history of China for thousands of years has proved time and time again that the traditional Chinese people's thinking and culture are flawed, especially when dealing with life value issues. On the one hand, for millennia, China's political system was based on absolute hereditary monarchies, or dynasties. All these dynasties adopted a dictatorship system, and the people must obey unconditionally. This caused the Chinese people to lack the spirit and habits of resistance. On the other hand, China has relatively rich human resources. Although each dynasty change resulted in a substantial decrease in the population, it soon increased again. I believe that every culture has its strengths and weaknesses. But as a Chinese, I pay more attention to the problems in Chinese culture to help Chinese Christians recognize and avoid our typical problems in the process of faith.

To awaken the Chinese people's in-depth thinking about the value of life and self-reflection, the researcher chose the theme of the Son of Man, comparing the

Chinese concept of humanity with those in the book of Daniel and Mark's Gospel.

The researcher will use library research, word study, table analysis, and the model of allusion and influence to do her research. She will refer to commentaries, Christological, and books introducing Chinese history and culture. A word Study of Messiah in chapter three will let the readers see this title is not commonly used in the Old Testament. To allow readers to see a large amount of information more intuitively, the researcher will display word study of Messiah in Old Testament, the sequence of Son of Man appearing in Old Testament, the markers in Mark 14:62 and the marked in Daniel 7:13, and Jesus' sayings of Son of Man in Mark's Gospel in the form of tables. To study the relationship between Daniel 7:13 and the Son of Man in Mark's Gospel, Ben-Porat's four-stages analysis explains how to recognize an allusion and the model of allusion and influence assists to study the purpose of Jesus' allusion.

The title Son of Man advocates the union of God and man and the noble roots of human, which is much bigger than our humble status. This view challenges Chinese people's concept of humanity. In light of the Danielic and Marcan view of humanity, we Chinese have to examine our culture traditions and history, abandon the narrow nationalism, and receive the gospel of the only God.

English Language Disclaimer

As a non-native speaker of English, I am aware that my writing may at times lack clarity, though I have attempted to write as clearly as possible. Please note that the primary purpose of this work is to acknowledge a theory and to apply it to a particular context. I appreciate the editorial assistance I have received from various individuals but acknowledge that the responsibility for this work is entirely my own.

Dedication

To my parents

献给我的父母

Acknowledgements

Thanks to God for saving me and using me.

Thanks to my mother Li Li (我的母亲：李丽) .

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Table of Contents

Chapter 1	Introduction.....	1
1.1.	The Statement of the Problem.....	1
1.2.	The Purpose of the Study	2
1.3.	Foundation and Premise of the Study	3
1.4.	Literature Review.....	3
1.5.	The Research Methodology	9
1.6.	The Limitations of the Study	11
1.7.	Chapter Outline.....	12
Chapter 2	The Chinese Concept of Humanity	15
2.1.	The Traditional Religions in China.....	17
2.2.	The Chinese Concept of Humanity	26
2.3.	The Impact of Communism on Chinese Concept of Humanity	38
Chapter 3	The Son of Man in Daniel 7	49
3.1.	The Book of Daniel.....	50
3.2.	Daniel 7.....	52
3.3.	The Son of Man	53
3.4.	The Son of Man in Daniel 7.....	66
3.5.	The Danielic View of Humanity	72

3.6. The Danielic and Chinese Concept of Humanity.....	85
Chapter 4 The Son of Man in Mark's Gospel	87
4.1. Mark's Gospel.....	87
4.2. The Marcan View of Humanity	90
4.3. Jesus, the Son of Man in Mark's Gospel.....	103
4.4. The Man Jesus.....	114
4.5. Jesus Fulfills Daniel's Son of Man	119
4.6. The Marcan and Chinese Concept of Humanity	121
Chapter 5 Conclusion	125
Bibliography	130

Chapter 1

Introduction

The researcher hopes to find a theme that can both include the study of the Old Testament and take care of the modern Christians' love for the New Testament, which will prove the unity between these two Testaments. The topic of Son of Man is such a theme.

As an early Millennial, the researcher grew up in mainland China. As her experience accumulates, she gradually discovered that in Chinese culture, human value does not have their adequate respect. Therefore, the title of the Son of Man that Jesus designated for himself aroused her interest greatly.

1.1. The Statement of the Problem

Whether in the study of Old Testament theology, New Testament theology, or Systematic Theology, the Son of Man is a big topic. Especially in the New Testament, Jesus' self-designation as the Son of Man has made this title unique and attracted the attention of numerous scholars. In the Old Testament, the most notable use of Son of Man appears in Daniel 7. Did Jesus allude to the Son of Man from Daniel 7:13? Or is it a coincidence for him to use this title? In this researcher paper, the researcher will study whether Jesus quoted from Daniel 7:13 and the interaction between the two scriptures.

When Chinese complain the unfairness of certain social systems and welfare systems, as well as the decline of social morality, they often conclude it to the overall character of Chinese people. Therefore, the researcher believes that it is necessary to sort out the Chinese concept of humanity and find help from the biblical concept of the Son of Man.

1.2. The Purpose of the Study

The purpose of this thesis is to explore the Marcan concept of Son of Man and how Jesus' self-understanding influenced by Daniel's Son of Man. We will then proceed to show how this biblical concept of Son of Man help to enrich the Chinese Christians' concept of humanity.

Through this study, the researcher proved that the title of the Son of Man used by Jesus was borrowed from the book of Daniel. The Son of Man in the book of Daniel and Mark both refers to the Messiah. The reason why Jesus used the Son of Man instead of Messiah is because his messianic mission is completely different from the Jewish people's general understanding of Messiah at the time. By combining the suffering servant and Son of Man together, Jesus fulfills Daniel's Son of Man and explained how the vision in Daniel 7 was realized. This understanding of Son of Man helps to enrich Chinese Concept of humanity because it shows us the sacredness of human.

1.3. Foundation and Premise of the Study

In this thesis, the researcher will abide by the following two principles as her research guidelines. The whole research cannot conflict with any of them.

The first principle is to accept the Apostles' Creed, the second is to accept "those perfections of God which are revealed in Scripture and which are exercised and demonstrated by God in his various works."¹ It is true that we cannot fully comprehend God, but we still can have true knowledge of him. Westminster Shorter Catechism offers us a short definition of God, which is a help summary of the various attributes of God, "God is a spirit, infinite, eternal, and unchangeable in his being, wisdom, power, holiness, justice, goodness, and truth." In addition, God is self-sufficient, omnipotent, omniscient, omnipresent, faithful, merciful, gracious, loving, and glorious.

1.4. Literature Review

1.4.1. The Son of Man in Daniel

Some scholars as Morna D. Hooker read Son of Man in Daniel 7 to be the people of Israel, not an individual figure or personal Messiah. She thinks there is little evidence to prove Son of Man is a Messianic title at the time of Jesus and it is

1. From Dr. Mel Loucks' textbook of Doctrine of God.

unjustified to assume “one like a Son of Man” to be Messiah. She argued that Israel is already the true Son of Man to whom dominion belongs by right.²

However, other scholars believe these comments are out of date. As John J. Collins said, the “Son of God” text from Qumran suggests that Daniel 7 was understood with reference to a Davidic messiah from an early point.³ It is possible for Daniel to use some traditional material for his contemporary readers. What Cullmann discovered is reasonable, that “this simple word man is indeed the title of a mediator who is to appear at the end of time”.⁴ In the book *He That Cometh* S. Mowinckel said Daniel is using some conceptions from the traditional material. For him, there was a heavenly being in human form in Judaism at 200B.C. or even earlier. This heavenly being will appear at the turn of the age and reign over all nations and peoples with the power and authority from God. These scholars believe the idea of suffering of the Messiah does occur in Judaism, but it is different from the meaning in Christianity:

The suffering is associated with the danger and the exertions which are the lot of the messiah in the war with the heathen, and with the throws of the messianic age, the last great affliction which will befall all the pious, and sometimes with the period during which the

2. Morna D. Hooker, *The Son of Man in Mark* (London: SPCK, 1967), 29.

3. John J. Collins, *The Scepter and the Star: Messianism in Light of the Dead Sea Scrolls* (Grand Rapids: William B. Eerdmans Publishing Company, 2010), 191.

4. Oscar Cullmann, *The Christology of the New Testament* (Philadelphia: The Westminster Press, 1958), 139.

messiah is still hidden, unknown, misunderstood.⁵

In fact, there is a suffering Messiah in Judaism. The *Apocalypse of Ezra* mentions the death of the Messiah. Though there is no mention of suffering or atonement, it said the Messiah must die like all other men. The *Similitudes of Enoch* mentions both the suffering and death of the Son of Man.⁶ Horbury is right, John 1:45 and John 12:34 could prove that the Son of Man was titular enough to evoke the thought of Messiah in first century Jewish hearers, and their messianic beliefs primarily attached not to newly revealed apocalypses, but to the law and the prophets.⁷

1.4.2. The Son of Man in Mark's Gospel

George S. Duncan and J.Y. Campbell believe Jesus took the concept of Son of Man from Ezekiel, which shows his prophetic consciousness. But most British scholars like T. W. Manson believe Jesus' Son of Man is taken from the book of Daniel. When it comes to the Old Testament background of Son of Man in the Gospels, the verse that is most thought of and valued is Daniel 7:13.

5. Sigmund Mowinckel, *He That Cometh* (New York: Abingdon Press, 1956), 328.

6. Ibid., 411.

7. W. Horbury, "The Messianic Associations of the Son of Man," *Journal of Theological Studies*, N.S., Vol. 36, Pt. I (April 1985): 37.

To study the relationship among texts, the “influence” and “allusion” approach is more helpful. It focuses on how one composition evokes its antecedents, how one author is affected by another, and what sources a text utilizes.⁸ According to Ben-Porat’s Four-Stages analysis, many similarities can be noted between Daniel 7:13 and Mark 14:62. They share three key subjects: Son of Man, coming with clouds, and the Ancient of Days or the Mighty One. Based on Sommer’s study approach, if we ignore the inserted verse of Psalm 110:1, Jesus quoted exactly Daniel 7:13a in the same word order. So, the split-up pattern helps us to confirm that the similarity between Daniel 7:13 and Mark 14:62 results from Jesus’ deliberate use of the older text rather than coincidence.

Some scholars like Mowinckel argued Son of Man in Daniel 7 is an exalted and heavenly figure, and there is no suffering at all. Hooker identifies the suffering servant figure in Isaiah 53 to be Israel, to remove the difficulty of the idea of resurrection. Oscar Cullmann affirmed that the official Judaism at the time of Jesus did not include atoning suffering as a necessary part of the Messiah idea, and that even if one can show the existence of the conception of a suffering Messiah, it was at best marginal and weak. On the other hand, this conclusion explained the reason Jesus chose this title. This seldom used title gives Jesus space to input new meaning. He did

8. Benjamin D. Sommer, *A Prophet Reads Scripture: Allusion in Isaiah 40-66* (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1998), 6.

not call himself Messiah because his mission is completely different from the general understanding of Messiah at the time. Ladd added that the title of Son of Man reveals his uniqueness of the Son in the three persons of the Trinity.

1.4.3 About China

Voltaire and Leibniz's admiration for China, Hegel's contempt for China, Dawson's confusion about China, Obama and Merkel's greed for China's money shows that Westerners do not know enough about China. From the limited resources, the researcher found three representative scholars to introduce China comprehensively to readers from the perspectives of Chinese social structure, Chinese religions, and traditional Chinese characters.

1.4.3.1. Chinese Social Structure

The most important cultural factor that stabilizes China society is her family system. Chinese people regard family system as a treasure and even grant it a religious significance. The famous Chinese scholar Yutang Lin, Christian, two times nominee of Nobel Prize in Literature believes that the Chinese clearly know that the true meaning of life lies in enjoying a simple life, especially the happiness of family life and the harmony of social relations. The lack of religion is the consequence of this perception. The Chinese people's humility and courtesy are only for the people in their family system. In a word, the core of Chinese social consciousness is family

consciousness. Therefore, Chinese culture does not train citizens, but selfish persons.

1.4.3.2. Traditional Chinese Characters

Zhang Rongming believes the traditional Chinese personality is determined by people's livelihood activities. For thousands of years, Chinese people relied on traditional agriculture to survive. People are fixed on land and taking the land to be their highest pursuit until now. On the one hand, such traditional agricultural economy is self-sufficient and rarely requires cooperation with others.

Chinese traditional agricultural civilization and feudal autocratic society have constructed Chinese survival-oriented personality characteristics. Just alive is the most prominent and essential Chinese traditional personality. So, Chinese people rarely fight and rarely resist. But endurance is a prerequisite and basic living skill. In addition, people want to live same life, with similar economic conditions. Probably this is one of the reasons why communism resonates strongly in China.

1.4.3.3. Chinese Religions

From Ji Guoqing's research, Confucianism, Daoism, and folk beliefs all start from the concept of heaven. In general, belief in heaven is the belief of the Chinese.

But this heaven is not the same being as God in Christianity. In China, heaven is mainly the kind of supernatural power that truly arranges human destiny and is the supreme object of Chinese worship. Meanwhile, heaven also represents the

representative of supernatural forces on the ground, that is, the emperor, Son of Heaven. In addition, from the time of the Zhou Dynasty, the Chinese people connected the worship of heaven with the worship of ancestors. Worshiping ancestors is a simplified version of ordinary people's worship of heaven. In Ji Guoqing's opinion, heaven worship is a step backwards of belief.

1.5. The Research Methodology

The researcher will use four research methods to complete this research report, which are library research, word study, table analysis, and the model of allusion and influence.

As a Th.M. thesis, by its very nature, this research is mainly based on library research. The selection of library research books includes three groups in general. First, the researcher will refer to commentaries in ITS library both in the study of Daniel and Mark's Gospel. Besides commentaries, Christology books is also an indispensable reference. Relevant content in theology of God and Man will not be ignored too. The third group of reference book is about introducing Chinese history and culture, some of them have nothing to do with theology. However, they deeply dig into the Chinese way of thinking, and provides a valuable perspective for the world to understand the Chinese people fundamentally. The researcher will not just rely on materials found in physical

libraries, electronic and online materials will also be used in this research.

Word study is a basic way to study theological terms. It is often believed that “the Messiah” can be found everywhere in the Old Testament. But according to word study, this title alone does not appear many. The Old Testament only used it 38 times, and most of them have adjective possessive or adjective suffix. God used this title very carefully in the Old Testament, and it did not really symbolize the Savior many times. Word Study of Messiah in the Old Testament is included in chapter three.

The researcher believes that table is a particularly useful research method, which can make people discover useful information more intuitively. When doing the word study for Messiah, the researcher made a table to sort all the 38 usages. Readers can see the study result from one Table, instead of reading many pages. The researcher also made a table for the sequence of Son of Man appearing in the Old Testament, which is included in chapter three. From this table, readers can easily discover how God upgraded the title of Son of Man in the Old Testament. In chapter four, when studying Jesus’ sayings of Son of Man in Mark’s Gospel, the research made a table for all the sayings. There are 13 times of Jesus' teaching about the Son of Man, of which 7 mentioned the suffering of the Son of Man, through which, readers can quickly understand the focus of Son of Man in Mark's Gospel.

To study the relationship between Daniel 7:13 and Mark 14:62, the model of allusion and influence is reliable. If readers ignore the inserted verse of Psalm 110:1,

Jesus quoted exactly Daniel 7:13a in the same word order. This split-up pattern helps to confirm Jesus' deliberate use of Daniel's text. First, Ben-Porat's four-stages analysis explains how to recognize an allusion. Second, the model of allusion and influence assists to study the purpose of Jesus' allusion. The Son of Man is not only a pre-existing being in heaven; he also appears in weakness and humbleness as one of people, to suffer and die on the cross is his destiny. In a word, Jesus borrows the title of Son of Man from Daniel and inputs new meaning to it.

1.6. The Limitations of the Study

Although the researcher did her best to make this research fully prepared, she understands that there are some inevitable limitations in this study.

Firstly, people always have biases, no matter whether we are aware of them or not. According to the definition in English by Oxford Dictionary, bias is the inclination or prejudice for or against one person or group, especially in a way considered to be unfair. The researcher may be biased due to her own cultural background and personal claims about specific phenomena, and this bias may affect the rationality of the research. Especially because of the dictatorship of the Chinese government, which has caused many man-made disasters in China since 1949, the researcher is inevitably biased when it comes to study on the relevant topic.

Secondly, regarding the title of Son of Man, many outstanding scholars have

published a huge number of valuable works. However, due to the COVID-19 pandemic, almost all seminary libraries are closed, so the researcher cannot borrow more books except those in the bibliography. Especially when it comes to the subject of Danielic and Marcan view of humanity, there are not many materials that the researcher can refer to. If she can have more effective information, then the research results will be more convincing.

Thirdly, in the study about Chinese concept of humanity, the researcher has the same problem of lack of information. In mainland China, books involving criticism of Chinese culture and China's ruling party are not allowed to be published. It can be said that all Chinese propaganda agencies share the same tongue. Really valuable books on Chinese culture and the current situation of China can only be found in Hong Kong, Taiwan, and Singapore. Therefore, when the researcher wrote this research paper in the United States, she could not find more related books.

1.7. Chapter Outline

Chapter One is the introduction of this research paper. It includes the statement of the problem, the purpose of this study, the foundation and premise of the study, literature review, research methodology, limitations of the study, and the chapter outline.

In chapter two, the researcher will study Chinese concept of humanity. First,

she will introduce China from a religious perspective. There are four major religions in China, Confucianism, Daoism, Buddhism, and folk beliefs. These religions embodied the Chinese people's religious feelings, ways of thinking and personality characteristics from different aspects. Then, she will study the traditional Chinese concept of humanity, from the definition and creation of human in Chinese culture, their belief of heaven, the family system, to their traditional personality characteristics. The last topic that must be mentioned is the impact of communism on the Chinese concept of humanity. For the Chinese, the three new thinking patterns communism brought, materialism, atheism, and class warfare, are not completely unfamiliar. At the end of chapter one, the researcher will briefly introduce the Chinese Christianity before and in communism time.

In chapter three, the researcher will focus on studying the identity of the Son of Man in Daniel 7. The researcher will first investigate the Messiah concept and Son of Man concept in Jewish tradition. In terms of the relationship between Messiah and Son of Man, although there is no doubt that for most of Jewish people, the Messiah is still the warlike Davidic king, it is possible for Daniel's readers to fully understand the Messianic meaning of the Son of Man. In Daniel's vision, before the Son of Man appeared, human was like weak animals, which echoed with the history in the Garden of Eden. But when the Son of Man appeared, it became a new world of unity and harmony. Then, the researcher will study the Danielic view of humanity and compare

it with the Chinese concept of humanity.

Chapter four will first study the Marcan view of humanity. With the help of the model of allusion and influence, the researcher confirms that Jesus borrowed Son of Man from Daniel the prophet to make his own message readily understood. This seldom used title gives Jesus space to combine the suffering servant and Son of Man together. From Mark's Gospel, we see being possessed by demons and illnesses have both physical and spiritual meanings. The stories of "who is greater" and Pilate also reflect people's inner desires. But the Syrophoenician Woman's Story allows us to see that sinners truly recognize their status and long for recovery. As a human being, Jesus overcame temptation, and began his ministry immediately instead of staying away from people like Chinese gurus. The miracle of five loaves and two fish shows that God's supply is the reason for the continuous operation of the human world, and his supply is always sufficient, more than we need.

Chapter Five will be the general conclusion of this research thesis. The researcher will briefly summarize the key points and conclusions of every chapter and sum up the final conclusions.

Chapter 2

The Chinese Concept of Humanity

China is the oldest country in the world with a continuing cultural tradition. Its population also ranks the first in the world. China used to be a powerful empire and a striking conqueror but was also invaded by small neighbors (Mongolia, Manchuria, and Japan) and has a long history of humiliation. The earliest known written records of the history of China date from as early as 1250 BC, from the Shang dynasty (c. 1600–1046 BC). In the past 3300 years, China has formed its own unique literature, philosophy, and wisdom.

Voltaire, the leader of Enlightenment in the 18th century, known as the first disciple of Confucius in Europe, believed that China was the oldest, biggest, most beautiful, most populous, and best managed country in the world. Leibniz also praised China and believed the Chinese have noble ethics and they respect each other. However, one hundred years later, Hegel evaluated China as an authoritarian country. It is not surprising that scholars have such conflicting opinions. Raymond Dawson described China as a chameleon in his book *The Chinese Chameleon*. China has at one time or another been thought to be rich and poor, advanced and backward, wise and stupid, beautiful and ugly, strong and weak, honest and deceitful—there is no end

to the list of contradictory qualities which have been attributed to her.¹ Voltaire and Leibniz's admiration for China, Hegel's contempt for China, Dawson's confusion about China show that Westerners do not know enough about China. It can be said that it is impossible to have a correct evaluation of the nationality of a certain nation if it is not a member of its own nation. In this chapter, the researcher, as a Chinese Millennial will focus on studying the Chinese concept of humanity.

Probably because of ethnicity and culture, most Chinese people seem to be less aggressive and not dangerous. However, among these "harmless" people, China has experienced 25 dynasty changes and 15 population extinctions in her long history. Among them, the highest proportion of deaths is from the following 11 times.

The peasant war in the last years of Qin Dynasty wiped out 70% of the original population; 65% of people died in the war of late Western Han Dynasty; Only 1% of people survived after the turmoil of the Three Kingdoms period; 60% of the population was lost in the Southern and Northern Dynasties; the population loss counted in the early Tang Dynasty was 73%; 68% of people were killed in the Anshi Rebellion of Tang Dynasty; at the end of the Tang Dynasty, the Huang Chao Rebellion lost 76% of the population, and a large number of people were eaten as grounded meat; Yuan Dynasty destroyed Song Dynasty, and 91% of the Hans were killed, which was included in 1985 Guinness World Records; in the wars of late Ming Dynasty, 80% of the population was lost; in Bailianism Rebellion of Qing Dynasty, the death toll is 110 million; in Taiping Rebellion from 1851 to 1863, China lost 200 million people.²

1. Zheng Yangwen. *The Chinese Chameleon Revisited: From Jesuits to Zhang Yimou* (London: Cambridge Scholars Publishing, 2013), 2.

2. Ji Guoqing, *The Mystery of China* (Beijing: Beijing Institute of Contemporary Chinese Language, 2017), 93-96.

After the Communist Party came to power, China experienced several political movements with a death toll of 3-5 million. Between 1959 and 1961, 30 to 40 million Chinese were starved to death. The death toll in the Cultural Revolution is still a mystery until now.

According to the "Facts of Historical and Political Movements Since the Founding of the People's Republic of China" co-edited by the CPC Central Party History Research Office and other four departments in 1996, more than 17.28 million people died abnormally during the Cultural Revolution. In the meeting CCP Central Committee on December 13, 1978, Ye Jianying, then vice chairman and minister of defense disclosed that 20 million people died during the Cultural Revolution.³

This cruel killing history might be included in Guinness World Records. Why do the gentle Chinese people have such a brutal killing history? What is the meaning of human life for Chinese people? The research will start from the traditional Chinese beliefs and gradually explore the Chinese definition of human, Chinese theory of human creation, personality of Chinese people and its cause, etc.

2.1. The Traditional Religions in China

Before Communism, China was a feudal country with a civilization of 3,300 years. The influence of religion is deep rooted, and it cannot be completely changed by atheistic communism within only 100 years.

3. "Cultural Revolution", Google Cultural Revolution, accessed June 20, 2020, <https://zh.wikipedia.org/wiki/%E6%96%87%E5%8C%96%E5%A4%A7%E9%9D%A9%E5%91%BD%E6%AD%BB%E4%BA%A1%E4%BA%BA%E6%95%B0>.

There are four major religions in China, Confucianism, Daoism, Buddhism, and folk beliefs.

2.1.1. Confucianism

Confucianism was founded by Confucius two thousand and five hundred years ago. It originally referred to a position, the master of funeral ceremony, later gradually formed a complete Confucian ideological system and became the mainstream of traditional Chinese culture with far reaching influence.⁴

In the history of China, 6th century B.C. to 1st century B.C. was the most brilliant era of ideology and culture. Confucianism was one of the hundreds of schools who competed and promoted unprecedented academic development. Although founded by Confucian, it is Zhongshu Dong that made Confucianism the only and official ideological orthodoxy three hundred years later. With Zhongshu Dong's suggestion, Emperor Wu of the Han Dynasty implemented the policy of "dethroning all the other schools but respecting Confucianism alone". Confucianism became the ideological orthodoxy of the ruling class.

Zhongshu Dong established the new Confucianism into a system of governance dedicated to the feudal ruling class. He made emperors the head religion

4. "Confucianism", Baidu Confucianism, accessed July 13, 2020, <https://baike.baidu.com/item/%E5%84%92%E5%AE%B6%E6%80%9D%E6%83%B3/>.

leaders, Confucius as the first teacher, Confucian ethics, and morality as a political basis. Severe punishment of legalism as an auxiliary mode, and the political trickery of Daoism became governance mode, and these became the basic pattern of Chinese feudal society's ruling ideas.

The most basic theoretical basis is “the theory of goodness”, which believes that human nature is good and bad behaviors are only later infected. Therefore, society management should start with moral education and persuade people to give up bad habits and return to the congenital good status. This theory is highly praised because both society and individuals need morality. However, the theory of goodness cultivates the self-righteous habit of Chinese people. With this theory as a basis, it is difficult for the Chinese to accept that people are sinners. In fact, there is no corresponding word in Chinese to translate the English word “sin”.

Another major problem lies in the core value of Confucianism, which is Li. Li could be variously translated as ritualism, rite, custom, measure, and rule. It is a system of ritual norms and propriety that determines how a person should properly act in everyday life. It includes two parts. First, as a political system, it mainly includes the official, feudal hierarchy, patriarchal, legal, and military systems. Second, Li has its manifestation, that is, etiquette and rule, which includes all aspects of behavior from politics to daily life. This system is regarded as an important connotation of

ancient Chinese civilization, but the center of the Li system is hierarchy.⁵ People must follow the tight and detailed requirement and perform according to their identity. To perform Li, people must control themselves, restrain their desires, obey etiquette, eliminate violence, and suppress passion.

Confucianism, like Buddhism, is just ethics. However, Buddhists are required to remove all desires; Confucians only need to get rid of all irrational desires. In a word, Confucianism is a codex for secular people, including political norms and social ritual rules.⁶

From the perspective of faith, although Confucianism focuses on the present world, not heaven, the core of Confucianist doctrine is heaven worship. Heaven is the ultimate source of Li system and music culture, and the order determined by heaven is the ultimate goal of Li.⁷

2.1.2. Daoism

Confucianism is practical, dogmatic, rigid, and breathless. But Daoism is the representative of Chinese romanticism, provides people with imaginary and beautiful

5. Ji Guoqing, *The Mystery of China* (Beijing: Beijing Institute of Contemporary Chinese Language, 2017), 130.

6. Max Weber, *Confucianism and Daoism* (Beijing: Commercial Printing Hall, 2004), 203.

7. Ji Guoqing, *The Mystery of China* (Beijing: Beijing Institute of Contemporary Chinese Language, 2017), 219.

world that Confucianism lacks. It makes people no longer stick to rules and breaks the class restrictions. Therefore, in Chinese history, Daoism always stood on the side of the opposition party.

Daoism is a native religion in China. Laozi was regarded as the first teacher of Daoist school. Whether he existed or not is not clear, but the work is attributed to him. His famous book Tao Te Ching laid the foundation of Daoism and is the second most translated book after Bible. The earliest Daoist worship could be traced back to the ancient heaven and ancestor worship. On this basis, Daoism absorbed the ideas of “five elements” and theories of Yin and Yang. After a reformation between 5th and 6th century A.D., it gradually evolved into the current Daoism.

Daoism is a polytheism that worships many gods. Its main purpose is to pursue longevity, immortality, and save people’s lives. “Dao” and “Virtue” are its basic beliefs.

Daoism is a philosophical or religious tradition of Chinese origin which emphasizes living in harmony with the “Dao”. The “Dao” is a fundamental idea in most Chinese philosophical schools; in Daoism, however, it denotes the principle that is the source, pattern and substance of everything that exists. Daoism differs from Confucianism by not emphasizing rigid rituals and social order, but is similar in the sense that it is a teaching about the various disciplines for achieving "perfection" by becoming one with the unplanned rhythms of the universe called "the way" or "dao".⁸

For Daoism, “Dao” is the origin and domination of all things in the universe,

8. “Daoism”, Google Daoism, accessed June 23, 2020, <https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Daoism>.

omnipresent and involves everything. Daoism believes that all things are evolved from “Dao”, and “Virtue” is the embodiment of it. Maybe it is because “Dao” has such a definition that Chinese Bible uses Dao to translate “the Word”. So “the Word became flesh” is translated to be “the Dao became flesh” in Chinese, which might be confusing for Chinese believers.

Daoism has expanded its range of ideological theories to medicine and pharmacy, physiology and cosmology, magic, spells, witchcraft, astrology, myth, supernatural being, Chinese Kungfu, and a set of fitness method based on deep breathing. For Chinese people, Daoism is an attempt to discover the mysteries of nature and study the natural science.



The Daoist Tai Chi picture above expresses the Chinese understanding of the dialectics of contradiction. Although it reveals certain laws of the operation of matter, it also brings ideological and ethical corruption to the Chinese. There is white in black, black in white, and nothing is absolute. In Chinese history, the Daoists are good at playing trickery because they do not respect rules or laws.

In Matthew, when Jesus sent out the twelve disciples, He taught them that they

should be as shrewd as snakes and as innocent as doves. This teaching could satisfy Chinese believers because it responds their usual way of thinking. This black in white and white in black thinking is regarded as wisdom for the Chinese. The Chinese are obsessed with learning tricks. Fighting like a knight who confronts his enemy face by face is not encouraged in Chinese culture but shows a lack of ability.

The biggest advantage of this Daoistic thinking is that there is no obstacle for the Chinese to understand the divinity and humanity of Jesus. His divine-human nature will not make the Chinese feel incomprehensible.

It can be recognized that Confucianism is more about making political and social rules, while Daoism is more about influencing Chinese people's heart and thinking. We can conclude that Chinese people are inherently Daoist and culturally Confucian.

2.1.3. Buddhism

Buddhism is the only religion introduced by foreigners and to become an important part of Chinese life. For the Chinese intellectual, Buddhism is philosophy; for ordinary people, Buddhism is a religion.

Buddhism enjoys a high reputation among Chinese literati as a system of knowledge. Other religions have not been comparable to it so far. Confucianism was transformed by Buddhism in its history. Many Confucianists first studied Buddhism,

then returned to Confucianism and began to study it from a new perspective.

Daoism is a native religion in China, but it is not as prosperous as Buddhism. According to estimates by the Chinese government in 2008, there were 16,000 temples and 200,000 monks in China at that time, 1500 Daoist temples and 25,000 Daoist priests. Buddhism is more popular because Buddhists are more enthusiastic at preaching and their books are easier for ordinary people to understand.

The most direct influence of Buddhism on the Chinese people is its reincarnation theory. It teaches people to be kind to the nature and other people. Otherwise, he might become a dog or a beggar in his next life. For the pragmatic Chinese people, this teaching is more direct and practical than hell. Therefore, the kindness of people who believe in Buddha is not commendable, because their kindness is basically for selfish purposes.⁹

Buddhism has been criticized for serving the ruling class. It masks class oppression in slave and feudal society and requires people to be obedient and pinning hope in the afterlife.

2.1.4. Folk Beliefs

If Confucianism, Daoism and Buddhism are three systematic beliefs, the Chinese folk beliefs, like Mazu in Taiwan and worshipping ancestors, is less

9. Lin Yutang, *The Chinese* (Shanghai: Xuelin Press, 1994), 134.

institutionalized but closer to the daily life of Chinese people. Although there is no way to name folk belief a religion, as a complex compound, it has a critical position in Chinese society.

The Chinese had gradually formed a special set of views on the universe about 3500 years ago, that is, the ideological structure of heaven, earth, and people. They believe this world is a whole and extend infinitely from a center to four directions. Sun, moon, stars, wind, rain, thunder, and lightning has its own department and closely related to heaven, earth, and people. Any kind of unusual change is a special omen. Therefore, when thinking about the problems of heaven, earth, people, and ghost, the ancient Chinese always regard the universe as a unity that covers everything and has an order.¹⁰

This order is not set by law, regulation, knowledge, or technology, but just a mysterious rule. Chinese people believe that if people obey this order, they can control their fate. The basic elements connecting the heaven, the earth, people, and ghost are Yin and Yang, “five elements”, and so forth. Daoism also absorbed these basic elements.

Different regions have different folk beliefs. Neither of them follows a theoretical route to develop, but changes with people’s need. When people have less to eat, they worship stove god. Then people want money, they worship god of wealth. In fact, folk belief reflects people’s needs. People hope man could be a complex of destiny which can be read, so they develop numerology, physiognomy, and name study.

10. Liu Qingqian, *God, Man, Life and Death* (Taipei: PCT Press, 2003), 62-63.

Apart from foreign Buddhism, Confucianism, Daoism, and folk beliefs all start from the concept of heaven. In conclusion, belief in heaven is the general belief of the Chinese.

2.2. The Chinese Concept of Humanity

In Cambridge Dictionary, human nature is the natural way of behaving that most people share. It does not only correspond to physical world but to the interactions among human beings and with the cultural, social realities.

2.2.1. Definition of Human in Chinese Culture

The Chinese concept of human relates to the concept Ren (仁), that is, benevolence.¹¹ In this character, 人 means human, 二 means two. The design of people in Chinese culture means that two people must be used to define one person. In other words, the concept of human is a combination of social relations. This design shows that Chinese believe people are restricted by community, and the individual is not his true owner.¹²

Chinese people who are wrapped in the community are easy to maintain their

11. Jia, Yunxin, *The Embodied Nature of the Chinese Concept of the Self: Self as Appropriateness and Beauty*, accessed June 18, 2020, <https://web.uri.edu/iaics/files/03-Yuxin-Jia.pdf>.

12. Sun, Longji, *The Deep Structure of Chinese Culture*, accessed June 18, 2020, <https://cread.jd.com/read/startRead.action?bookId=30382797&readType=1>.

psychological balance, because they do not need to face the world by themselves but are surrounded by the warmth of human relations. This explains why Chinese people seem to have fewer mental illnesses. However, when the self-boundary is abolished, people must follow the path of life set by the society and fail to express the diversity of individual life, which greatly affected the traditional characters of Chinese people.

2.2.2. Creation of Human in Chinese Culture

Communist China keeps advocating evolution theory. Before this, there are two legends about creation of human in Chinese culture, one is Pan Gu split the heaven and Nv Wa made human, the other one is Lao Zi's theory. The first one is more popular and is still used as a story for children.

The story of Pan Gu and Nv Wa tells that in remote antiquity, there were no humans. A god called Pan Gu broke the chaotic universe and split the heaven and earth apart. His body turned into the sun, moon, and stars in the sky, mountains and rivers on the ground, birds, fish, and beasts on the earth but there were still no humans. Then a goddess named Nv Wa made clay figures after Pan Gu and herself. After several days of hard work, men and women were created. Nv Wa also gave the law of marriage to keep human behaviors within bounds.

This story has some similarities to God's creation in Bible, but they are different fundamentally. In the Bible, God first created Adam and then created Eve

with Adam's rib. These two creations are simply different in time, but homogeneous. However, in the Chinese genesis, Nv Wa divided people into two categories at the beginning of creation: those who were made by Nv Wa's hands were nobles, and those who made up with drew out mud by rattan sticks were untouchables.

This shows that the Chinese hierarchy has a long history since ancient times. Such Genesis teaches people that the inequality between people is from the time they were created. Pan Gu and Nv Wa disappear as history evolves. Therefore, the other problem is China's Genesis does not have a clear and unchangeable transcendent being as the source of value.¹³

2.2.3. Belief of Heaven

Western people will shout "Oh, my God" when they are surprised, while Chinese people shout "Oh, my heaven". From the study of Chinese religions above, it can be found that there is "heaven" behind all these beliefs.

Do not take it for granted that "heaven" means nature. In China, heaven is mainly the kind of supernatural power that truly arranges human destiny and is the supreme object of Chinese worship. Meanwhile, heaven also represents the representative of supernatural forces on the ground, that is, the emperor, Son of

13. Ji Guoqing, *The Mystery of China* (Beijing: Beijing Institute of Contemporary Chinese Language, 2017), 117.

Heaven.¹⁴ The emperor is the worship object for people. As for the right to worship heaven, it is monopolized by the emperor alone.

In the Chinese language, there is no such term as Son of Man. In contrast, the history of Son of Heaven is as long as that of Chinese feudal society. The emperor is a god different from man. He not only represents god, but also has a blood relationship with the god. So, the emperor's command is god or heaven's command. Their lives are more noble and valuable than other people. When Emperor Gao Zong of the Tang dynasty was buried, the value of his funeral items accounted for 1/3 of GDP that year. When Wu Zetian, the only female emperor in Chinese history died, her son brought 1/3 of the country's gold, silver, and jewelry into the mausoleum with her. The imperial power itself is a supreme form conferred on religious priesthood. In a certain sense, the emperor overrides the supremacy of folk gods. His personal status is completely based on him as the plenipotentiary of heaven and his ancestors are living in this heaven now.¹⁵

In recent years, some scholars have come to believe that the object of worship in the Shang Dynasty is a monotheist god. In Zhou Dynasty, although god did not

14. Ibid., 336.

15. Max Weber, *Confucianism and Daoism* (Beijing: Commercial Printing Hall, 2004), 194.

disappear, the worship of heaven gradually replaced the worship of god.¹⁶ Although heaven is a natural existence, the people of Zhou Dynasty gave it an ethical function. There are a lot of documentation about those who have virtue can bear the fate as the Son of Heaven. This ethical function on the surface is that the ruler is morally constrained, but in fact it is a moral mask for his power.¹⁷ In addition, from Zhou Dynasty, Chinese people associated the worship of heaven with the worship of ancestors. Worshiping ancestors is a simplified version of ordinary people's worship of heaven. In Chinese New Year, people worship heaven by worshiping their ancestors.

Chinese people worship heaven, this heaven is an integral part of the system of heaven, earth, and man. The problem with an impersonal worshiping object is that heaven will choose and give by itself. What people can do to is to obey its will. This is totally fatalism. Moreover, heaven is a concrete and abstract thing. Its existence is real but cannot be touched. Its function is like totem, whose power is extended to all fields by people, which is a step backwards of belief.¹⁸

16. Ji Guoqing, *The Mystery of China* (Beijing: Beijing Institute of Contemporary Chinese Language, 2017), 377.

17. Ibid., 379.

18. Ibid., 378.

2.2.4. Family System

The most important cultural factor that stabilizes China is her family system. Chinese people regard the family system as a treasure. It even contains a religious meaning. There is a word that best represents the importance of the family system to China, that is “国家”, which means “country and family” in English. Therefore, the country is composed of various families and the country itself is a big family.

The family system is the foundation of Chinese society, and the Chinese social characteristics derived from it can be used to explain all the phenomenon in Chinese society. The family system produced the family concept. The family concept produced certain social behavior norms, which almost replaced the position of religion. Through family inheritance from generation to generation, it can even satisfy people's desire for eternal life. When people worship their ancestors, their eternal life seems so realistic and vivid.

Chinese society is cut into small family units. There is the largest collaboration in every family unit, but no real connection between family units. Family members establish an invisible town with strong walls.

In the town, people help, support, even sacrifice for each other; out of the town, people ignore the existence of others, and even consider others are threats. Chinese often proclaim that they are humble and polite to others, but this is a misunderstanding. Their humility and courtesy are only for the people in their family system. The polite attitude of the Chinese to people outside their family system is the same as the British attitude towards

people of other races in the colony. In a word, social consciousness in China is not the consciousness of the whole society, but only the consciousness of the family.¹⁹

The family system has its own advantages. First, the elders and children will be well taken care of. Second, the family system gives its members more sense of security. For a long time, the existence of the family system has maintained the stability of Chinese society.

However, the family system cannot promote social progress. In a dictatorship centered around parents, the family system deprives young people of their ambition, courage, and originality. Moreover, it leaves no space for civic awareness. People are easy to neglect their social responsibilities. Chinese like to use “scattered sand” to describe themselves. Every sand does not represent every individual, but every family. In other word, Chinese culture does not train citizens, but selfish person.²⁰

It is worth noting that the hierarchical system also appears inside the family. Paternal family and relatives are closer than the maternal lineage in relation. So, the father’s father is grandpa, but mother’s father is the outsider grandpa.

2.2.5. Traditional Chinese Personality Characteristics

In 1890, the American Congregation missionary Arthur Henderson Smith

19. Lin Yutang, *The Chinese* (Shanghai: Xuelin Press, 1994), 188.

20. Ibid., 190.

published a book named *Chinese Characteristics*.²¹ In 1920s, this book was still the most widely read book about China among foreign residents. In this book, he listed 27 typical personalities of Chinese people. Some of them are positive, like polite, hardworking, frugal, benevolent, contented, and tenacious. He also mentioned some disadvantages of Chinese people like they lack integrity and compassion and despise others.

Character formation is a result of multiple factors. Besides religion, the most influential factor is people's livelihood activities.²² For thousands of years, Chinese people relied on traditional agriculture to survive. People are fixed on land and taking the land to be their highest pursuit. The attachment of Chinese to the land is also reflected in the present. For example, Westerners are accustomed to renting houses, but for Chinese, without their own house is like a tree without roots.

On the one hand, such traditional agricultural economy is self-sufficient and rarely requires cooperation with others.²³ This mode of production gives people a certain degree of autonomy and independence, but they are also scattered and isolated.

21. Arthur Henderson Smith, *Chinese Characteristics*, accessed June 28, 2020, <https://www.yooread.net/8/189/>.

22. Zhang Rongming, *Daoist, Buddhist, Confucianist Thought and Chinese Traditional Culture* (Shanghai: Shanghai People's Publishing House, 1994), 288.

23. *Ibid.*, 289.

In the time without science and technology, people need to rely on traditional agricultural experience and act according to the old rules, which will be shared within their family.

Another factor contributed to the formation of national character, which cannot be ignored is the weaken-people policy by the rulers for more than 2000 years. The rulers of the feudal society were worried that the common people would not obey if they were too rich. Moreover, the development of commodity economy will overwhelm the agricultural economy, causing land merging and endangering the feudal system. As a result, all dynasties strictly restrained business in Chinese history. In 2000 years, the commodity economy has not developed completely and the people have not become rich.

2.2.5.1. Survival-oriented Personality

Chinese traditional agricultural civilization and feudal autocratic society have constructed Chinese survival-oriented personality characteristics. To survive, people can do anything or do nothing at all. Just alive is the most prominent and essential Chinese traditional personality.²⁴

One manifestation of survival-oriented personality is that it pays much attention to material life rather than spiritual pursuit. Another manifestation is that

24. Ibid., 282.

people highly depend on others and the environment instead of transforming the environment. Such people are accustomed to others to arrange their own affairs, so Chinese people hope their family can settle everything for them.

2.2.5.2. Super Endurance

In Chinese traditional personality consciousness, endurance is a prerequisite and basic living skill. They believe that people can endure anything except death.²⁵ Confucianism, Daoism, and Buddhism advise people to tolerate in different ways. In Chinese language, endurance(忍) is a knife inserted into the heart. People who can tolerate are considered successful.

Endurance is not a willing act, nor a virtue, but a helpless way to avoid conflict and failure. Unless the minimum survival needs are threatened, Chinese people's endurance could be endless.

2.2.5.3. Utilitarianism

The Chinese people attach great importance to realistic utility and realistic interest. There is nothing wrong to be realistic, but if excessive, it will become utilitarian. Profit is regarded as the top need when people making choices and judgments, and selfishness will be the production of this personality. Flattering the

25. Ibid., 285.

owner of power or money and despising the one without is also a production of this personality. In addition, it will also cause short-sightedness, which means only value the immediate profit but not the future consequences. The serious environmental pollution in China today is the consequence of such short-sightedness.

2.2.5.4. Seeking Similarities

Chinese seeking similarities means people not only require themselves to be the same as others, but also others to be the same as themselves. No one should be unique, showing a strong state of unity.²⁶ This mentality involves almost all areas and aspects of Chinese social life. They want to live same life, with similar economic conditions. They like the same clothing style, same food and play same games. But seeking similarities is different from asking for egalitarianism. How does a farmer seek similarities with the noble? In other words, seeking similarities is restricted to people's own hierarchy. Probably this is one of the reasons why communism resonates strongly in China.

2.2.5.5. Enjoying A Simple Life

Most Chinese people only care about this life rather than afterlife, they do not have the concept of Christianity's eternal life. The Chinese clearly believe that the

26. Ibid.

true meaning of life lies in enjoying a simple life, especially the joy of family life and the harmony of social relations.²⁷ The Greek style happiness is to show off personal ability, which is not attractive for Chinese at all. In ancient times, the simple life that Chinese people hope for was romantic rural life; now, is the leisurely life of urban resident.

This appeal is understandable, because 2000 years of dictatorship has led to the shortage of development opportunities in China, which makes the Chinese realize that having a simple life is already a blessing.

2.2.5.6. Following the Old Ways

Westerners prefer to pursue something new, but people who have been to China know that the Chinese people trust ancient things more. For instance, if a Chinese advertises a new food, he will demonstrate that it is made with a recipe hundreds of years ago to increase the credibility of the product. But if it is McDonald's advertising, people will emphasize that it is a new product made with a new formula.

The Chinese people have a deep respect for things which have a long history. For them, the "old way" has withstood the test of history and is the summary of the experience of generations. In fact, another expression of sticking to tradition is fear of

27. Lin Yutang, *The Chinese* (Shanghai: Xuelin Press, 1994), 110.

innovation

2.3. The Impact of Communism on Chinese Concept of Humanity

Communism has entered China for only 100 years, but it has a profound impact on Chinese society.

Communism is a philosophical, social, political, economic ideology and movement whose ultimate goal is the establishment of a communist society, namely a socioeconomic order structured upon the ideas of common ownership of the means of production and the absence of social classes, money and the state.²⁸

Communism is a very tempting eschatological doctrine. It copied Christian millennial theory and utopian socialists' designs for the future.²⁹ Nikolai Berdyaev and Karl Löwith claimed that Marxism is a secularized Jewish or Christian messianism. When Chinese people accepted Communism 70 years ago, they dreamed to live in a democratic country. However, the reality far exceeds their dreams. The Chinese had to face a smarter, crueler, and more insidious ruler.

28. "Communism", Google Communism, accessed on July 1, 2020, <https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Communism>.

29. Ji Guoqing, *The Mystery of China* (Beijing: Beijing Institute of Contemporary Chinese Language, 2017), 14.

2.3.1. *New Thinking Patterns*

Since the founding of People's Republic of China in 1949, CCP began to shape people's new thinking patterns. These thinking patterns include three aspects, which are materialism, atheism, and class warfare.³⁰

Materialism believes that material is the root of the existence, change and development of everything. Life is also material, no difference from other things. The origin of life is explained by evolution and people are just high-level animals. Class warfare refers to confrontation and struggle between classes, caused by the economic status and material interests of different classes. In feudal society, class warfare is between the peasant class and the landlord class, in capitalist society, between proletariat and the bourgeoisie. This theory is Mao Zedong's main ideological perspective. He divided the Chinese into two camps, people versus class enemy. For class enemies, the dictatorship of the proletariat must be implemented. Class warfare theory is one class destroys another class or one class rules another, there is no concept of equality in its theory but only hostility.³¹

The Chinese people must be educated to accept these three ideas from an early

30. Fan Xuede, *Overcoming the Myth of Faith* (Paradise: Ambassadors for Christ Inc, 2006), 6.

31. Ji Guoqing, *The Mystery of China* (Beijing: Beijing Institute of Contemporary Chinese Language, 2017), 323.

age. They need to study the proletariat worldview and have unconsciously absorbed those worldviews and become their own. For adults who receive the gospel after adolescence, they might look at Christianity with a pair of glasses. Glasses represent traditional Chinese culture, materialism, atheism, evolution, class warfare, patriotism, etc.

2.3.2. *Materialism*

The communist theory is a complete theoretical system. Marxist philosophy, scientific socialist theory, and political economy are three important components of this theory, and Marxist philosophy refers to materialism.

Materialism is a form of philosophical monism that holds that matter is the fundamental substance in nature, and that all things, including mental states and consciousness, are results of material interactions. According to philosophical materialism, mind and consciousness are by-products or epiphenomena of material processes, without which they cannot exist.³²

The materialism propagated by CCP has always regarded the interests of the proletariat as the highest standard for judging whether something is good or evil. But who are people? Are they always right? Since the world is materialistic, I came to this world by accident and have nothing to do with people, why should I obey them? This

32. “Materialism”, Google Materialism, accessed on July 5, 2020, <https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Materialism>.

is a dilemma in materialist propaganda.³³

Engels used to defend materialism that in the eyes of ordinary people, materialism is equivalent to eating, drinking, playing, enjoying, and alcoholism. Some scholars also explained that the view that only material profits are important is not materialism but realism. Many people seem to believe in materialism, but the concept that truly guides them is realism. From the perspective of realism, materialism fits the Chinese appetite. Because the core of the pursuit of Chinese secular values is longevity, prosperity, wealth, fortune, property, and having many children and grandchildren.

The proletarian revolution has swept away all religions, advocating that religions are superstition. But people have the instinct to pursue truth and they must believe “something”. So, CCP made a god for Chinese people, that is Mao Zedong. However, in 1976, Mao Zedong died and in the last ten years of his life, the cultural revolution he set off was one of the most tragic periods in Chinese history, which made people realize that he is not god at all.

2.3.3. Propaganda

One important reason why CCP can develop results from its successful

33. Fan Xuede, *Overcoming the Myth of Faith* (Paradise: Ambassadors for Christ Inc, 2006), 211.

propaganda strategy. Propaganda is their most powerful skill and has a pivotal position in handling domestic and international affairs.

Propaganda is information that is used primarily to influence an audience and further an agenda, which may not be objective and may be presenting facts selectively to encourage a particular synthesis or perception, or using loaded language to produce an emotional rather than a rational response to the information that is presented. In the 20th century, the term propaganda has often been associated with a manipulative approach, but propaganda historically is a neutral descriptive term.³⁴

This composition of thinking patterns is not in born but indoctrinated from childhood. The first impression is often the deepest impression. To form these communist thinking patterns, education starts from preschool and kindergarten. The teacher is CCP's spokesperson. They will keep telling the kids how good CCP is. As a result, regardless of philosophy, politics, economics, education, entertainment, law, ethics, religion, sociology, etc., all fields of human spiritual culture must show the worldview of the proletariat. The brainwashing internal propaganda way is mainly for the purpose of stabilizing Chinese society. When society is stable, their regime will be stable, and the CCP will continue.

Successful internal propaganda has made the current Chinese people lose the ability to question and think independently.

Moreover, propaganda is also used in dealing with international affairs. In

34. "Propaganda", Google Propaganda, accessed July 8, 2020, <https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Propaganda>.

2009, China decided to invest 7 billion and half to promote the "Great External Publicity Project" globally, to "scramble for the right to speak" with Western media.³⁵

The focus of international propaganda in each continent is different. But its main purpose is to serve China's global expansion, which is currently represented by economic expansion.

2.3.4. Privileged Class

In 1949, the CCP won the Chinese Civil War and established People's Republic of China. After that, the CCP members who participated in the war against Japan and Civil War were rewarded as leaders of the country according to their contributions. In the following 30 years, they carried out a brutal political struggle against each other until the 1980s. Those survived families became rich with China's economic development. There are about 500 privileged families in China, of which about 150 families are more powerful ones. These families, together with their children, relatives, friends, and subordinates constitute a core system of about 5,000 people.³⁶

By controlling state-owned monopolies like telecommunications, power

35. Ye Lin, *China's Foreign Publicity 45 Billion Is Not in Vain?* accessed July 18, 2020, <https://www.voachinese.com/a/china-disinformation-20180522/4405588.html>.

36. Lin Yi, *500 Privileged Families Kidnapped Mainland China*, accessed July 20, 2020, <https://www.aboluowang.com/2017/0609/942631.html>.

industry, bank, real estate, non-ferrous metal, energy, entertainment and arms business and intermarriage between families, they firmly control China's resources and form their own interest groups. As early as 2006, the World Bank reported that 0.4% of China's population controlled 70% of the wealth. China has become the most polarized country in the world. According to the Hong Kong classic magazine "Contest" in July 2016, 80% of the second and third generations of these privileged families have become billionaires through business, and the average time for them to become billionaires is just 5 years.

In the local government, there are also local privileged families. Although their capabilities cannot be compared with these 500 families, they can still monopolize local resources. Therefore, modern China is still a country with a clear hierarchy.

2.3.5. Patriotism Idol

The great German poet Heine distinguished two patriotisms: French style, and German style.³⁷ The French patriots not only love their own country, but also love the entire civilized world. The German style patriots have a narrow patriotism and only love Germany, hate civilization and freedom, oppose the spirit of humanitarianism

37. Xiao Xuehui, *Analysis of "Patriotism"*, accessed July 25, 2020, https://blog.boxun.com/hero/xiaoxuehui/46_1.shtml.

and fraternity. The French style is a healthy patriotism because it loves all the truth, goodness, and beauty, which connect with independence, freedom, equality, democracy, and human rights. But the narrow patriotism limits its love within only one country and excludes the universal values and common values of humankind.

In fact, narrow patriotism is nationalism that has long caused conflict in history. Those who with power in authoritarian countries have a special favoritism for patriotism. With this name they can not only obtain many benefits in their country, but also take the people as hostages to threaten other countries. Einstein described nationalism as leprosy for humans. Hitler said the effectiveness of nationalism is manipulating the public's attention to aim at a common enemy. Samuel Johnson, an old English literary who opposed human rights said: "Patriotism is the last refuge of the scoundrel."³⁸ Augustine wrote in the book IV of *The City of God*: "Justice being taken away, then, what are kingdoms but great robberies? For what are robberies themselves, but little kingdoms?"³⁹ Nationalism is nothing but hiding the cowardice of the ruling class in their people and use them as human shields.

The Chinese in 19th century opposed Christianity because it was contrary to

38. Mortimer Adler and Charles Van Doren, *Great Treasury of Western Thought* (Jilin: Jilin People's Publishing House, 1988), 329.

39. Reinhold Niebuhr, *The Nature and Destiny of Man: A Christian Interpretation* (Hong Kong: Chinese Christian Literature Council, 1989), 212.

Chinese tradition; but the modern Chinese oppose Christianity because it is part of imperialist aggression. Now, there are two kinds of Christian Churches in China. One is family church or underground church and the other is Three-Self Patriotism Church. Three-Self Patriotism Church refers to the Chinese Christian Church led by the CCP government in terms of self-governance, self-support, and self-propagation. The Three-Self Movement, which began in the 1950s, was first known as the "Patriotic Movement", which puts patriotism ahead of love for the Church.

Narrow patriotism will quickly transform into anti-Westernism, which is to reject material and spiritual civilization from the West. But China is not the same as North Korea. The Chinese people have long been accustomed to various commodities from the West and are also full of expectations for democracy and freedom. Therefore, anti-Westernism is not easy to push in today's China.

2.3.6. Self-deification

Self-deification is a big trend in China today, that is, to believe that "I am God". People will praise, glorify, appreciate, affirm themselves, and everything is self-centered.

The reason why self-deification is popular in China is primarily due to social factors. After years of brainwashing, most Chinese are atheists, they do not believe in the existence of God. The only being they can trust is themselves. The second factor is

the long-standing theory of goodness of human nature.

In the self-deification, people could close their minds, refuse to accept new things and do not need to correct any shortcomings. They can do whatever they want, even if it hurts others. For them, moral laws are used to restrain the weak but the strong could legislate for themselves. What is evil to others might be good for the self-deified person. To realize their purpose, they can use others as tools.

2.3.7. Lack of Integrity

The US magazine “Science” published a report on June 20, 2020. According to the report, based on a field study in 40 countries and 300 cities around the world, it was found that the honesty of Chinese people ranked the bottom one. Even in the academia, the fraud issue of Chinese people is also noticeable. In March 2015, the British Modern Biology Press withdrew 43 papers, 41 of which were from China. In August of the same year, the German Springer Publishing Group withdrew 64 papers published in its 10 academic journals, most of which came from China. In October, publishing giant Elsevier, which owns well-known academic journals such as Lancet and Cell, withdrew 9 papers from its five journals, all from China.⁴⁰ The reason why these papers were withdrawn was that the publisher found some third-party

40. Xinhuanet, *Hundreds of Chinese Papers Withdrawn*,
<http://www.biodiscover.com/news/research/123681.html>.

organization provided false peer view in an organized manner, and some authors even directly purchased papers from other people.

In fact, in Chinese traditional culture, dishonesty is not shameful but shows ability and wisdom. On the one hand, Chinese culture encourages people to be kind to others, but at the same time it also emphasizes that it is necessary to use strategy in doing things.

Chapter 3

The Son of Man in Daniel 7

In the Old Testament, God spoke to people through his agents, like prophets, priests, etc. While in New Testament, the Word became flesh and made his dwelling among people. Jesus Christ, the Word, declared that He is the Son of Man. Through Him, the connection between God and man is established, and the promise of salvation is fulfilled.

The title Son of Man also appears many times in the Old Testament. In Hebrew and Aramaic, the meaning of אָדָם and אֲנוּשׁ is human. They are synonymous and can be substituted for each other. In the book of Ezekiel, God called Ezekiel the prophet Son of Man (בֶּן אָדָם) to contrast God's divinity and Ezekiel's humanity. "What is man (אֲנוּשׁ) that you are mindful of him, the son of man (בֶּן אָדָם) that you care for him?" (Psalm 8:4) This verse emphasizes the difference between the creator and the creature. Different from the usage in the book of Ezekiel and Psalm 8:4, the one like a Son of Man in Daniel 7:13 is a god-like being that people will serve and worship. What Jesus said in Mark 14:62 is similar: "the Son of Man coming on the clouds", which led to a discussion about the source of Jesus' statement.

In this chapter, the researcher will first focus on studying the identity of the one like a Son of Man in Daniel 7:13. Is he a symbolical or mythical figure? Is he an

angel? Or is he the Messiah? Moreover, the researcher is interested in the Danielic view of man in the light of Son of Man and will compare it with the Chinese concept of humanity.

3.1. The Book of Daniel

According to the time mentioned in the scripture, the book of Daniel covers the entire period of Israel's exile. The time provided at the beginning of this book is the third year of the reign of Jehoiakim king of Judah, that is 605 BC. After King Nebuchadnezzar defeated the Egyptians, he stopped in Syria-Palestinian region for the first time. The last-mentioned reference is the third year of Cyrus king of Persia (10:1), that is 537 BC, shortly after the exiles were able to return to Judah for the first time.

The text of Daniel is in two languages: Hebrew (1:1-2:4a,8:1-12:13) and Aramaic (2:4b-7:28). Although two languages are used, the continuity of the content is not affected.

In addition to the overall ABA(Hebrew-Aramaic-Hebrew) structure, there is also an obvious literary technique in the Aramaic section, that is, Chapters 2 and 7 present the four empires in an extraordinary way; Chapters 3 and 6 use narratives to show God's power to save His servants; Chapters 4 and 5 discuss God's judgment on these proud kings, which makes the climax of Aramaic passage. These six chapters as a whole form historical theology. They are aimed at the kings of the whole earth and should be written in an international language. The

structure of ABCC'B'A' demonstrates the completeness of the Aramaic part of the book.¹

The book of Daniel could be divided into two sections as below. Scholars generally agree that the book of Daniel is the most outstanding example of apocalyptic literature in the Old Testament. From a structural point of view, Daniel's revelation is advancing step by step. Chapters 2, 7, 8, 9, 11 correspond to each other and gradually deepen from the content of revelation.

Section One: Stories

- I. Prelude: Background 1:1-1:21
- II. The nations and the Mighty God 2:1-7:28
 - A. Nebuchadnezzar dreamed of the four empires and the kingdom of God 2:1-2:49
 - B. Nebuchadnezzar saw God's servant rescued 3:1-3:30
 - C. Judgment on Nebuchadnezzar 4:1-4:37
 - C' Judgment on Belshazzar 5:1-5:31
 - B' Darius saw Daniel rescued 6:1-6:28

Section Two: Visions

A' Daniel's vision: Four kingdoms and kingdom of God 7:1-7:28

- III. The second and third kingdom 8:1-8:27
- IV. Daniel's prayer and the vision of seventy "sevens" 9:1-9:27

1. Alan Cole, *Tyndale New Testament Commentaries: Mark* (Taipei: Campus Evangelical Fellowship Press, 2002), 65.

V. Angel and the final vision 10:1-12:13

3.2. Daniel 7

According to Daniel 7:1, the prophet recorded his dream in the first year of King Belshazzar. That was the time Cyrus positioned Medo-Persian Empire as Babylon's new rival for dominance in the Near East.² About ten years later after Daniel received his visions in Chapter 7, King Cyrus would defeat Babylon and his kingdom would become the second kingdom Daniel saw in his dream.

Daniel 7 could be regarded as the most important chapter in the book. In terms of position, Daniel 7 closed the narratives of Babylonian court in the first part (Chapters 1-6) and began the eschatological visions in the second part (Chapters 8-12). From the perspective of language, it also ends the Aramaic part, which composes a complete ABCC'B'A' structure, and introduces the visions in subsequent chapters in Hebrew. Therefore, Chapter 7 is the point upon which the whole book turns.

Daniel's vision in Chapter 7 is parallel to Nebuchadnezzar's dream in Chapter 2. But Daniel 7 is not a simple repetition of the content in Daniel 2. The descriptions in the two passages are significantly different, especially the perspectives on world empires.

2. Andrew E. Steinmann, *Concordia Commentary: Daniel* (Saint Louis: Concordia Publishing House, 2008), 330.

The depiction of the four human kingdoms in Daniel 2 is relatively neutral. In a way, Daniel 2 portrays the splendor of them. But there is little information about the one who brings God's kingdom and the judgment of God against these kingdoms. However, as a divine revelation given directly to Daniel alone, Chapter 7's emphasis is that God's kingdom comes through the ministry of the personal Messiah, who establishes and receives the authority over this eternal kingdom.³ Moreover, the saints inherit the kingdom which is given to the Son of Man. Instead of portraying the splendor of the four human kingdoms and simply recording the succession of them, Daniel 7 includes the characterization of each kingdom, that is, beastly, horrible, and destructive. Therefore, compared with Daniel 2, Daniel 7 is more encouraging for God's people, especially when they suffer.

3.3. The Son of Man

After the dream of four beasts, Daniel wrote that "In my vision at night I looked, and there before me was one like a son of man, coming with the clouds of heaven. He approached the Ancient of Days and was led into his presence. He was given authority, glory and sovereign power; all peoples, nations and men of every language worshiped him. His dominion is an everlasting dominion that will not pass away, and his kingdom is one that will never be destroyed." The interpretation comes

3. Ibid., 328.

in 7:17 that the four great beasts are the four kingdoms which will rise from the earth, but the saints of the Most High will receive the kingdom and will possess it forever.

Who is the one like a son of man? Perhaps no other phrase in Daniel has brought more comment by scholars than it.

The many theories fall, on the whole, into three classes, although withal they develop their special nuances. They three classes are as follows: 1) The personal, Messianic interpretation, the eldest and, in past Jewish and Christian exegesis, the prevailing opinion; 2) the symbolical interpretation, the 'son of man' being type of the people of the saints, itself an ancient view; 3) the mythological theory, of recent origin, which finds in the 'Son of Man' a mythical and traditional figure of hoar antiquity---so joining hands in part with the Messianic interpretation.⁴

Besides these three interpretations, some scholars believe the figure of Son of Man is an angel, the heavenly counterpart to Israel, and the saints would also be seen as angelic beings.⁵

In these four perspectives, the Messianic view is the most ancient interpretation among both Christians and Jews but rarely held among critical scholars today.

3.3.1. Messiah concept in Jewish Tradition

Is the expectation of Messiah a common Jewish hope? The typical scholarly

4. James A. Montgomery, *A Critical and Exegetical Commentary on the Book of Daniel* (Edinburgh: T. & T. Clark, 1926), 307.

5. Raymond Hammer, *The Book of Daniel* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1976), 78.

perspective of this matter is presented in the books of Emil Schurer and George Foot Moore. They both proceeded on the assumption that there was a Messianic expectation system in ancient Judaism.

The system, however, is inevitably constructed from late source. The account in the revised edition of Schurer's classic is "based on all the intertestamental sources, including the Dead Sea Scrolls, but presented according to the pattern emerging from the apocalypses of *Baruch* and *Ezra* since it is in these two late compositions that eschatological expectation is most fully developed." The apocalypses in question, *4 Ezra* and *2 Baruch*, were written at the end of the first century CE. It is obviously problematic to infer from them the pattern of messianic belief throughout the so-called intertestamental period. Yet the sources available to Schurer and Moore included little other evidence of messianism in this period. Only two other documents in the Jewish Pseudepigrapha refer to a messiah. One, the *Psalms of Solomon*, written after Pompey's conquest of Jerusalem in 63 BCE, resembles *4 Ezra* and *2 Baruch* insofar as it speaks of a royal, Davidic, messiah. The other, the *Similitudes of Enoch*, is very different, and only uses the term "messiah" incidentally to refer to a preexistent, heavenly figure who is primarily patterned on the "one like a son of man" in Daniel 7.⁶

In fact, explicit documentation of Messianic expectation is rare, and if there was, at least we would have more evidence than we do now. Therefore, we have reason to believe that there were not uniform Messianism in Jewish ideas. What we do know is in later Judaism, the term Messiah denotes an eschatological figure, who belongs to the last time.⁷

Messiah means the anointed one. In the Old Testament era, there were some figures in Israel who were anointed with oil, and they were separated out to perform

6. John J. Collins, *The Scepter and the Star: Messianism in Light of the Dead Sea Scrolls* (Grand Rapids: William B. Eerdmans Publishing Company, 2010), 4.

7. Sigmund Mowinckel, *He That Cometh* (New York: Abingdon Press, 1956), 3.

certain duties appointed by God. The person who was anointed will have supernatural power and holiness.

But in the time of David, "Messiah" was given a new meaning, specifically referring to a person chosen by God. He is not only an anointed one, but also a savior of the Jewish nation. This belief has become the common hope of the Jewish people. And all these hopes stem from the promise made by God to the house of David, "Your house and your kingdom will endure forever before me; your throne will be established forever. (2 Samuel 7:16)"

In the Old Testament, kings, the conquering Son of David, are the primary expression of Yahweh's Anointed. The Psalms of Solomon shows us a picture of such a future Davidic king. This king will liberate Israel from Gentiles and rule a kingdom marked by holiness and righteousness. In Old Testament, Isaiah 9 and 11, Psalms 2/21/72/89/110/132 could support this idea. In Qumran literature, 4QFlor, 4Q521, 4QSon of God also offered evidence. We can conclude that there was a prevailing concept of Davidic Messiah who will restore Israel in the future in Judaism. This is a common notion at the turn of Jesus' era.

In addition, the Davidic Messiah is not the only paradigm of Messiah in Judaism. We could find four basic Messianic paradigms, king, priest, prophet, and

heavenly Messiah, and they were not equally widespread.⁸ The conception of Christian Messiah relies heavily on the heavenly Messiah paradigm rather than the conquering Son of David and developed it into Christian Christology which was far away from Judaism.

As a term often used in the New Testament era, Messiah does not often appear in the Old Testament.

It is often believed that “the Messiah” can be found everywhere in the Old Testament. In fact, this title alone does not appear in it. Every time this word appears, it has adjective possessive or adjective suffix, such as “Jehovah’s Messiah” and “my Messiah”.⁹

The Old Testament only used “Messiah (משיח)” 38 times. The researcher did word study of these 38 usages and divided them into the following 4 categories (see Table 1). The first category has nothing to do with the redemption. Although the scriptures of category 2 are not clearly stated, they are considered to refer to Messiah. Especially Psalm 89:51 connects “servant” with the Messiah. The earliest use of Messiah is in Hannah’s prayer, which also belong to this category. The anointed one in category 3 is David and his descendant. In Hebrew, the “descendant (זרע)” does not refer to the plural of all descendants of David, but the singular one, which means not

8. John J. Collins, *The Scepter and the Star: Messianism in Light of the Dead Sea Scrolls* (Grand Rapids: William B. Eerdmans Publishing Company, 2010), 18.

9. George Eldon Ladd, *A Theology of the New Testament* (Michigan: William B. Eerdmans Publishing Company, 1993), 151.

all of David's descendants are the anointed one, but only one, that is Messiah. This usage also makes the title "son of David" has a special meaning for Israelis. When Bartimaeus shouted: "Jesus, Son of David, have mercy on me", he confessed the identity of Jesus as Messiah. "Anointed one" appeared twice in the book of Daniel. Scholars have many disputes about who this anointed refers to. The researcher believes that the anointed one in these two places refer to Jesus Christ. A direct reason is that it took about 483 years from Ezra's rebuilding of the temple to Jesus (A.D. 27), which is exactly sixty-nine "sevens".

Table 1: Word Study of Messiah in Old Testament

CAT	Parts of Speech	Parsing	Scripture	Translation and Meaning
1	Adjective	s. m.	Lev 4:3, 4:5, 4:16, 6:22	the anointed
	Noun	s. m.	2 Sam 1:21	anointing
	Noun	p. m. + 1 s. suff.	1 Chr 16:22; Ps 105:15	my anointed ones
		p. m. + 2 s. m. suff.	2 Chr 6:42	your anointed ones
	Construct Noun	s. .m	1 Sam 24:6, 24:10, 26:9, 26:10, 26:11, 26:23 2 Sam 1:14, 1:16	Jehovah's anointed one (the title David called Saul)
	Noun	s. m. + 3 s. m. suff.	1 Sam 12:3, 12:5	His anointed one (King Saul)
	Noun	s. m. + 3 s. m. suff.	1 Sam 16:6	His anointed one (the new king Samuel was looking for)
	Noun	s. m. + 3 s. m. suff.	Is 45:1	His anointed one (King Cyrus)
	Noun	s. m. + 1 s. suff.	1 Sam 2:35	My anointed one (king)
		s. m. + 2 s. m. suff.	Ps 89:38, 132:10 Hab 3:13	Your anointed one (Kings of Israel)
	Construct Noun	s. .m	Lam 4:20	Jehovah's anointed one (king, probably

				Zedekiah)
	Construct Noun	s. .m	2 Sam 19:21	Jehovah's anointed one (King David)
			2 Sam 23:1	God's anointed one (King David)
2	Noun	s. m. + 3 s. m. suff.	1 Sam 2:10; Ps 20:6	His anointed one (King David, refer to Messiah)
	Noun	s. m. + 3 s. m. suff.	Ps 28:8	His anointed one (King, refer to Messiah)
		s. m. + 2 s. m. suff.	Ps 84:9, 89:51	your anointed one (King, refer to Messiah)
	Noun	s. m. + 3 s. m. suff.	Ps 2:2	His anointed one (refer to Messiah)
		s. m. + 1 s. suff.	Ps 132:17	My anointed one (refer to Messiah)
3	Noun	s. m. + 3 s. m. suff.	2 Sam 22:51; Ps 18:50	His anointed one (David and his descendant. This descendant is singular, which refers to Messiah)
4	Noun	s. m.	Dan 9:25, 9:26	Anointed one Jesus Christ

From the word study above, it can be seen that, except for Daniel 9, when “the anointed one” appeared as a title, it always had an attribute. And it should be noted that the only initiator of anointing is God. All these “his” or “your” in the Table 1 refer to God alone. Since the scriptures from Category 2 to 4 directly or indirectly point to Messiah, we can make a summary. First, Messiah’s strength and power is from God (1 Samuel 2:10), but he will be mocked by His enemies (Ps 89:51) and kings and rulers of the earth will stand together against him (Ps 2:2), then he will be

cut off and have nothing (Dan 9:25, 9:26). Finally, God will save him (Ps 20:6, Ps 28:8, Ps 84:9), show unfailing kindness to him (2 Sam 22:51, Ps 18:50), and he will be king forever (Ps 132:17). These messages are consistent with the life of Jesus Christ.

There are also some other scriptures in the Old Testament belong to Messianic Scriptures from their content although the title Messiah is not used directly. Among them, Isaiah 9 and 11 are the most noteworthy ones, which greatly influenced Judaism later.¹⁰ “For to us a child is born, to us a son is given, and the government will be on his shoulders (Is 9:5).” Therefore, Messiah will be a son of man, “he will slay the wicked with the breathe of his lips (Is 11:4), gather the exiles of Israel, establish and uphold his kingdom on David’s throne forever.

3.3.2. The Background of Son of Man in Judaism

In the Old Testament, the Son of Man first appeared as a heavenly figure in Daniel 7. Besides the Bible, this heavenly figure also appears in the *Similitudes of Enoch* (1 Enoch 37-71) and in 4 Ezra.

3.3.2.1. The Son of Man in Similitudes of Enoch (1 Enoch 37–71)

The *Similitudes of Enoch* is the earliest Jewish interpretation and reuse of Son

10. Ibid.

of Man in Daniel 7.

It is beyond doubt that the *Similitudes* allude to Dan 7:9-10, 13-14. The clearest allusions are in *1 Enoch* 46:1: “And there I saw one who had a head of days, and his head (was) white like wool; and with him (there was) another, whose face had the appearance of a man...” and in *1 Enoch* 47:3: “And in those days I saw the Head of Days sit down on the throne of his glory, and the books of the living were opened before him, and all his host, which (dwells) in the heavens above, and his council were standing before him.” The “Head of Days” is the Enochic equivalent of the Ancient of Days” in Daniel 7, and the one who accompanies him is Daniel’s “one like a son of man.” The Son of Man figure in the *Similitudes* is initially introduced as one “whose face had the appearance of a man” (46:1).¹¹

Some scholars identified this “Son of Man” with Enoch himself, because he is greeted by an angel on his ascent to heaven: “You are the Son of Man who was born to righteousness, and righteousness remains over you and the righteousness of the Head of Days will not leave you.” But the preexistence of the Son of Man strongly counteracts this view. According to *1 Enoch* 48:3: “Even before the sun and the constellations were created, before the stars of heaven were made, his name was named before the Lord of Spirits...he was chosen and hidden before him before the world was created.” Therefore, we can regard the angel calling Enoch “son of man” after the manner of Ezekiel.

Based on Daniel’s “one like a son of man”, this image shows considerable development in the *Similitudes*. First, in *1 Enoch* 48:10 and 52:4, the Son of Man is equivalent to Messiah. Second, “one like a son of man” appears after the judgment of

11. John J. Collins, *The Scepter and the Star: Messianism in Light of the Dead Sea Scrolls* (Grand Rapids: William B. Eerdmans Publishing Company, 2010), 197.

four beasts. But in *Similitudes*, he is said to cast down kings from their thrones and from their kingdoms, and he takes his seat on his throne of glory as judge (62:5;69:29).

Third, he seems to be as same as deity, and people worship him in 48:5.

Although they are not a work of explanation, the *Similitudes* still become an important testimony to the early understanding of Daniel. It serves as a significant evidence to show that this Messiah reading is at least one of the early understandings of Daniel 7. While they offer no reason to think that this figure was known independently of Daniel, they show how the Danielic text inspired visions of a heavenly savior figure in first-century Judaism.¹²

3.3.2.2. The Son of Man in *4 Ezra*

4 Ezra, a Jewish apocalypse at the end of the first century CE also reflected Daniel 7. *4 Ezra* 13:1-3 reports: “Then after seven days, I had a dream in the night, I saw a wind rising from the sea that stirred up all its waves. As I kept looking, that wind brought up out of the depths of the sea something resembling a man and that man was flying with the clouds of heaven...”

Most scholars read the man flying with the clouds of heaven as a clear allusion to Daniel’s the “one like a son of man.” Moreover, the interpreting angel tells Ezra in 12:11 that: “The eagle you observed coming up out of the sea is the fourth kingdom

12. Ibid., 205.

that appeared in a vision to Daniel your brother. But it was not interpreted to him in the same way that I now interpret it to you.” This verse showed that Ezra knew Daniel. In addition, *4 Ezra* offered an interpretation about the man: “then my son will be revealed, whom you saw as a man coming up from the sea” (13:32), which is also a reinterpretation of Daniel’s “one like a son of man.”

Compared with the *Similitudes of Enoch*, *4 Ezra* developed more about the concept of Davidic Messiah. In 7:28-29, the author wrote: “my son (or servant) the messiah.” Before *4 Ezra*, this usage has no clear precedent.

3.3.3. *The Son of Man in Old Testament*

In the Old Testament, the title Son of Man appears 109 times, the first of them is in Pentateuch, seven are in poetic books, and 101 are in prophetic books.

The following table (see Table 2) is arranged according to the order in which Son of Man appears in the Old Testament. In these uses, the researcher marked four of them in bold, which are the key for us to understand the meaning of Son of Man in the Old Testament.

Table 2: The Sequence of Son of Man Appearing in Old Testament

Book	Verses	Meaning
Numbers	23:19	Son of Man first appears in Bible Meaning: people
Job	16:21	Meaning: people
	25:6	
	35:8	
Psalms	8:4	Meaning: people

	80:17	Meaning: Israel
	144:3	Meaning: people
	146:3	Meaning: people
Isaiah	51:12	Meaning: people
	56:2	Meaning: people
Jeremiah	49:18	Meaning: people
	49:33	Meaning: people
	50:40	Meaning: people
	51:43	Meaning: people
Ezekiel	94 times	Meaning: God's prophet
Daniel	7:13	Son of Man last appears in Old Testament Meaning: Messiah

Son of Man first appears in Numbers 23:19. The first appearance of titles, locations, events, commands, etc. in the Bible often has important meanings and spiritual revelations. Son of Man in Numbers 23:19 points to people, and the background is Balaam, the pagan prophet was bought by the Moab king Balak to curse Israel, but under the command of God, he turned the curse into a blessing. God declares through Balaam: "God is not a man, that he should lie; nor a son of man, that he should change his mind." This scripture conveys the nature of humanity and a comparison, that people lie and then regret what they did, but God is faithful, he is always right and never change his mind.

In Psalm 80:17, the poet Asaph wrote: "Let your hand rest on the man at your right hand, the son of man you have raised up for yourself." Here the son of man refers to Israel, which has been chosen as godly, gracious, and holy people. Therefore, the son of man is no longer a broad term but refers specifically to Israel.

The book of Ezekiel includes son of man 94 times. This title is not used by Ezekiel to refer to himself but God to call Ezekiel. In this book, the son of man is not a nation or people concept but refers specifically to God's prophet. The repeated occurrence of this use is to emphasize that Ezekiel is a real person with flesh and blood. This is not only a biological meaning but also conveys that God chooses people to become his spokesperson.

The last use of Son of Man in the Old Testament appears in the book of Daniel. We have discussed this Son of Man is Messiah, and this appearance is a prelude of Jesus Christ, which is its climax in the Old Testament.

Studying the title Son of Man in the Old Testament, we notice there is a gradual progress.

- a. Numbers 23:19. The Son of Man represents the sinful nature of man.
- b. Psalm 80:17. The Son of Man is Israel---the nation God chose unconditionally among all peoples in the world. In this way, people are called to turn to the only true God.
- c. The book of Ezekiel. The Son of Man is the prophet. God calls people to become His prophet, to convey His will and prophecies to accomplish, and to preach God's faithfulness, love, power, and glory.
- d. Daniel 7:13. The Son of Man is Messiah. God Himself became flesh and accomplish the great salvation of life on the cross for us.

From the sinful nature of man to God's chosen people, to God's spokesperson, and finally to Messiah, the sequence of appearance of the Son of Man in the Old Testament reveals God's miraculous plan of salvation for man.

3.4. The Son of Man in Daniel 7

Daniel 7:18 mentioned that the saints of the Most High will receive the kingdom and possess it forever. This is the theoretical basis that some scholars believe that the Son of Man is a Collective Noun and refers to the saints of the Most High, specifically Israel. They believe a group of people who are determined to follow the Lord will fulfill the original role God gave to people, and this group of people are not restricted to Israel as a nation. The second possibility is to regard the one who is like the Son of Man as the representative of the saint of the Most High. Usually, the priest has a representative role among people. Besides, it is the king's identity that is equally representative but more in line with the context of Daniel 7. And this understanding echoes the hope of the Davidic Messiah in the Jewish tradition. There are similarities between these two views, they both regard the Son of Man as a certain group or representative. The third possibility is to regard Son of Man as an angel, perhaps the archangel Michael.

3.4.1. The Son of Man in Daniel 7 is the Messiah

Scholars like Morna D. Hooker and S. Mowinckel read Daniel's "one like a

son of man” to be the people of Israel, not an individual figure or any personal Messiah. Hooker argued that Israel is already the true Son of Man to whom dominion belongs by right.¹³ Mowinckel made a further explanation that Daniel is using some conceptions from the traditional material. These conceptions are already in his mind, he might use them symbolically as pictures. For him, there was a heavenly being in human form in Judaism at 200 BCE or even earlier. This image, as the people of Israel, will appear at the turn of the age, the dawn of the eschatological era, and reign over all nations and peoples with the power and authority from God. Because of the closer relationship with God, the Son of Man is also called the Son of God.

However, these comments were from more than a half century ago and Mowinckel wrote his book before Qumran Scrolls were discovered. As John J. Collins said, the “Son of God” text from Qumran suggests that Daniel 7 was understood with reference to a Davidic messiah from an early point.¹⁴ The people of Israel have several different symbolic names in the Bible except Son of Man. But the researcher does agree with part of Mowinckel’s explanation that it is possible for Daniel to use some traditional material. If the prophet needs to choose some symbolic figure or description, it must be something understandable for his contemporary readers. What

13. Morna D. Hooker, *The Son of Man in Mark* (London: SPCK, 1967), 29.

14. John J. Collins, *The Scepter and the Star: Messianism in Light of the Dead Sea Scrolls* (Grand Rapids: William B. Eerdmans Publishing Company, 2010), 191.

Cullmann discovered is reasonable, that “this simple word man is indeed the title of a mediator who is to appear at the end of time”.¹⁵

Based on the 13 confirmed clues Bicksler has listed in his book,¹⁶ the researcher summarized 9 confirmed clues about this Son of Man as follows:

- a. When the Son of Man appears, the fourth beast kingdom is reaching its climax.
- b. He looks like a man and comes with the clouds of heaven. He does not become a human from an eagle or a lion, but he is originally a human. Not like horns, he is a real person with human nature.
- c. He faced the life-threatening sea, and the beast came out from there. Man is from the dust, not from the sea, but he is from the heaven. His character is to manage beast as God commanded in Genesis, so he is the second Adam.
- d. He is led into the presence of the Ancient of Days and given the authority, glory, and sovereign power taken from the beast. His heavenly glory is not captured by himself but given.
- e. Compared with the leopard who was given authority to rule in 7:6, the

15. Oscar Cullmann, *The Christology of the New Testament* (Philadelphia: The Westminster Press, 1958), 139.

16. William H. Bicksler, *The Book of Daniel* (Taipei: China Evangelical Seminary Press, 2005), 134.

authority the Son of Man is given is eternal, royal, and glorious.

f. His power is supernatural, and he rules by the orders of Almighty God. All nations and peoples admit his authority and power.

g. His coming is a blessing to all mankind, not a fright.

h. His reign does not continue the terrifying history, and his trial does not break the history.

i. The saints is a vague title, and they may include both angels and humans.

Daniel the prophet does not mention the Son of Man will suffer but the saints will, and they will have the everlasting kingdom handed over by Son of Man.

Only the Messiah can meet all these above characteristics. In the New Testament, the Word became flesh and lived on earth for thirty-three and a half years. His first coming is to accomplish salvation, and his second coming is to reign and manage.

3.4.2. The Son of Man is not Israel

Understanding the Son of Man as Israel is one of the main perspectives against the Messiah view. Suppose the Son of Man is Israel, then Israel will be given authority, glory, and sovereign power from the Ancient of Days, and all nations and peoples will worship Israel.

This view sanctifies Israel to the position of God and contrary to the teachings

of the Bible. Moreover, if it is so, then Daniel will be an Israeli nationalist. What he saw could not be revelation from heaven but his own thought.

3.4.3. The Son of Man is not An Angel

In addition to the Israeli view, another popular perspective is to understand the Son of Man as angel.

Nathaniel Schmidt has argued that the one "like a son of man" is Michael. Kruse takes the figure to be the chief of the Angels of God. Coppens's position is that the figure represents the multitude of angels surrounding God, a combination of the symbolic and angelic interpretations. Finally, Ziony Zevit has modified Schmidt's view so that the angel is Gabriel instead of Michael.¹⁷

If the Son of Man in Daniel is really an angel, then this angel will be given sovereign power from the Ancient of Days and all nations and peoples will worship this angel. It means besides Jesus Christ, there is another one, an angel, that can sit on an equal footing with Him.

The great weakness of the angelic interpretation is that there is nowhere in the Hebrew canon do angels receive dominion and worship. Also, in New Testament revelation, only Jesus is the way and the truth and the life, salvation is found in on one else, for there is no other name under heaven given to men by which we must be saved.

17. Michael B. Shepherd, "Daniel 7:13 and the New Testament Son of Man." *Westminster Theological Journal*, WTJ68 (2006): 99-111. Accessed September 2, 2020.

3.4.4. The Relationship between Messiah and the Son of Man

There is no doubt that for most of Jewish people, the Messiah is still the warlike Davidic king. As for “the thought of atonement as the peculiar work of the messiah, or of an atonement for the sins of the world, never occurs”.¹⁸ However, the expectation of the Son of Man in Ezra and Baruch confirms the fact that the religious life of Palestine was much richer and more varied than the usual scheme which differentiates only between the Pharisees and Sadducees.¹⁹

The researcher believes that Davidic Messiah and Son of Man probably have their own different cluster of motifs, but there is certain overlap between them. In addition, the Targumist will have understood Messiah and Son of Man as parallel designations.²⁰ As a matter of fact, the various resource and debate from different scholars about these two terms suggest that the origin of them is widespread at an earlier date than the first century AD and the beginning of the second.

It is possible for Daniel’s readers to fully understand the meaning of the Son of Man. Collins mentions that John 1:45 and John 12:34 could prove that the Son of

18. Sigmund Mowinckel, *He That Cometh* (New York: Abingdon Press, 1956), 329.

19. Oscar Cullmann, *The Christology of the New Testament* (Philadelphia: The Westminster Press, 1958), 142.

20. W. Horbury, “The Messianic Associations of the Son of Man,” *Journal of Theological Studies*, N.S., Vol. 36, Pt. I (April 1985): 49.

Man was titular enough to evoke the thought of Messiah in first century Jewish hearers, and their messianic beliefs primarily attached not to newly revealed apocalypses, but to the law and the prophets.²¹ In John 12:34, the crowd ask, “We have heard from the Law that the Christ will remain forever, so how can you say, ‘The Son of Man must be lifted up’? Who is the ‘Son of Man’?” Apparently, the crowd think the Christ (Messiah in Greek) is equal to the Son of Man.

3.5. The Danielic View of Humanity

Daniel the prophet does not directly describe his view of humanity, but besides the one like a Son of Man and the saints of Most High, he carefully recorded the images of four beast-kingdoms. This is a hint for his readers to develop Danielic view of humanity.

About the sources of these beasts,

Kvanvig has located the sources for the representation of these monsters from Babylonian demonic imagery, particularly the list of fifteen demons in The Assyrian Vision of the NetherWorld (Kvanvig 2005:260). He has shown how each of the four monsters corresponds to the description of some of the fiends of this Babylonian underworld. On the other hand, John J. Collins has suggested the Ugaritic Baal myths as the conceptual framework which influenced this representation, especially the cosmic battle between Baal, the rider of clouds, and Mutu, the prince of death, or Yammu, the prince of primeval waters.²²

21. Ibid., 37.

22. Matthew Michael, *Yahweh, the Animal Tamer: Jungles, Wild Animals and Yahweh's Sovereignty in the Apocalyptic Space of Daniel 7:1-28*, <http://scriptura.journals.ac.za>.

Besides the source of animal imagery in ancient Near Eastern mythology, another possible source according to Michael B. Dick is ancient royal hunting. He has manifested the importance of royal hunting in Neo-Assyrian inscriptions and the ideological importance in the representation of Assyrian kings within this conceptual frame. As an act of demonstrating ruling power, the emperors of the Qing Dynasty of China went to hunt in the Royal Hunting Park every fall. In general, the four-beast description shows Daniel's understanding of the political world as a scary wild habitat.

According to Daniel's description, the situation of the beast kingdoms is getting worse and worse, and God's people must suffer more and more. The tension between them is not stable but increases dramatically.

3.5.1. Echoing with the History in the Garden of Eden

In Daniel's vision, the people of God must face the persecution from animal-like kings and regimes. This echoes with the history of Adam and Eve in the Garden of Eden.

In Genesis, man was made in the image of God. Fish of the sea, birds of the air, livestock, all the earth, and all the creatures were ruled over by man. After the fall of man, the ground is cursed, and enmity was put between animals' and women's offspring. Literally, this punishment makes people know the tension between people

and the outside world. Spiritually, the description of Daniel sheds light on a further understanding of the consequence of human's fall.

There is an eternal hostility between the believers and the devil. The earth is under attack by counter-divine, demonic forces, causing terror and destruction among humans.²³ Moreover, Satan is not the only enemy of believers but also Satan's servants, namely, anyone who is willing to be used by the devil. Furthermore, the new self and the old self are also enemies. The process of putting off the old self and putting on the new self is a battle between the flesh and the spirit.

This punishment results from human's fall in the Garden of Eden. Our sinful nature is the root cause of these bad consequences. When there were only four people in this world, killing was already there. On the other hand, the first murder of mankind was that the evil person killed the righteous one. As the population increased, the scale of the killings also increased, human society finally became a wild habitat.

3.5.2. People becoming Animals

The portray of these four predators manifest the predatory and oppressive character of human political structure which seeks to hunt the vulnerable. No matter what beast it is, it is not a truly human. Animals have no human consciousness. They

23. Helge S. Kvanvig, *Throne Visions and Monsters. The Encounter Between Danielic and Enochic Traditions*, <https://www.degruyter.com/view/journals/zatw/117/2/article-p249.xml>.

do not feel shame, or guilty. In fact, for human beings, animal quality is sinfulness.

Monsters violate the borders between man and beast or human and divine, but they are also a way of talking about the rejected or repulsive. Monsters disturb a shared sense of decorum, order, and taste. They are grotesque, distorted, ugly, bestial, and horrifying. They fascinate and repel. They are said to link bodily deformity to moral or political evils. And, above all, monsters offer a way of thinking about the world.²⁴

Moreover, animals have no creating power but only destructing abilities. In the narrative of Daniel, what we read is one country attacks another one with violence power, but there is no record of restoration or construction.

However, people admire animals' superior power and their ruthlessness and coldness. Some emperors and famous generals in ancient China were known for their cruelty. For example, in 260 B.C.E., the most famous general of Qin Dynasty, Bai Qi, killed 400,000 soldiers who had already surrendered. Cold-blooded and no benevolence has become the requirement for the emperors in Chinese culture.

Daniel used animals to describe nations and kings, indicating that a human is no different from an animal. One example is King Nebuchadnezzar.

Nebuchadnezzar was driven away from people and ate grass like cattle. His body was drenched with the dew of heaven until his hair grew like the feathers of an eagle and his nails like the claws of a bird. Since ancient kings are connected to eagles,

24. Safwat Marzouk, *Monstrous Empires and the Kingdom of God: What Do Monsters Reveal about the Empire?*

<https://www.ctsnet.edu/at-this-point/monstrous-empires-kingdom-god-monsters-reveal-empire-2/>.

it is not surprising that a reference to the hairs and claws of Nebuchadnezzar are connected to an eagle.²⁵ Obviously, Nebuchadnezzar did not enjoy his eagle life. His sanity was restored with his recognition of the true God. When the humbled king raised his eyes toward heaven, he rose from the state of a beast to the state of a man with the image of God. Nebuchadnezzar's experience shows that when human is content with humanness, our potential monstrosity could be avoided.

It is worth noting that in regard to violence, Rene Girard has a theory: it is not the differences between us that lead to violence, it is the similarities. When a subject and a rival mimic each other in desiring one object – that is, they are similar and pursue a similar goal – clash is inevitable.²⁶ It is conceivable that advocating violence like animals is not caused by one king or two kings. It shows the tendency shared by the entire society.

3.5.3. The Animal Worship

Chinese people are familiar with animal worship. The 12-zodiac system is a good illustration. The ancient Chinese people choose 12 animals to represent each year. This system circulates every 12 years and has lasted for about 2800 years.

25. Matthew Michael, *Yahweh, the Animal Tamer: Jungles, Wild Animals and Yahweh's Sovereignty in the Apocalyptic Space of Daniel 7:1-28, 6-7*, <http://scriptura.journals.ac.za>.

26. René Girard, *Violence and the Sacred* (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1979), 146.

Although there is no unified statement about the origin of the 12 zodiac signs, people now have a common understanding of the destiny represented by these animals. For example, people who were born in the pig year normally will have a good life. On the contrary, the fate of people who were born in the Year of Sheep is usually extremely bad, especially for women. As a result, the baby birth rate in the Year of Sheep is incredibly low. In China, dragon represents power and authority. People take it for granted that the one who were born in the Year of Dragon should be remarkably successful. The 12-zodiac system is also be used in fortune-telling. When getting married, the first condition to consider is to verify whether the zodiac signs of the new couple matches with each other.

Animal totem worship exists in almost all cultures, not only common people, but the ruling class also needs animals to express their ruling abilities. However, what happened to King Nebuchadnezzar directly mocked this totem worship.

At the time the researcher wrote this paper, a Chinese company caused a huge controversy worldwide, that is the Huawei Company. Huawei promoted “Wolf Culture” for a long time. They believe their company and employees should learn from wolves because wolves have three major characteristics that keep them alive: a keen sense of smell, an indomitable and relentless offensive spirit, and teamwork. With Huawei’s incredible commercial success, “Wolf Culture” has immediately become an example, admired, and imitated by many Chinese companies. Meanwhile,

Chinese society began to question Huawei's loss of humanity. To make money, Huawei is extremely strict to its employees. Employees have no time to rest, and they work overtime without extra pay. Huawei has developed rapidly relying on this low-cost labor. But only in 2008, 38 employees died abnormally. Huawei's president also admitted internally that "the increasing incidence of depression and anxiety among employees is very worrying."

The leader who pursues the power of animals will lose his humanity like Nebuchadnezzar. An institution like Huawei that promotes animal culture is nothing but changes a new name for modern slavery.

3.5.4. *The Weak "Animals"*

With highest power, can people really be fearless? Daniel depicts three kings in his book. The first king Nebuchadnezzar was troubled by a dream and could not sleep. What we see is that he can conquer countries but was unarmed by a dream. He also made an image of gold and set it up on the plain of Dura, ordering that everyone should worship the idol. If he really believes in this god he made, it will be a typical self-deception. If not, it means he knows he needs to rely on supernatural power to defend his authority.

Whereas Nebuchadnezzar expressed his rage and anger to the extreme, Belshazzar's characteristic emotion is fear to such a degree that his face turns white,

his knees knock, and he loses continence.²⁷

The third king, Darius the Mede, is well-disposed toward Daniel. But his desire for power blinded his eyes and becomes a tool manipulated by the administrators and satraps, finally brought Daniel into the lion's den.

3.5.5. The People Who Worship God

Those who worship God, despite being taken captive to Babylon, still worship God. In the fiery furnace, Daniel's three friends still refused to serve the image of gold set up by Nebuchadnezzar. Even though the human world is very much like the animal habitat, God will protect and guide his chosen ones.

Speaking of the identity of Daniel the prophet, a question arises. Is Daniel a prophet among politicians? Or a politician among the prophets? If he is a politician among the prophets, then being a prophet is to serve him being a politician. Daniel is a prophet among politicians. God has not taken away our identity in the world. For those who worship God, no matter where they are or who they are, they worship God.

3.5.6. God Value Human

Nebuchadnezzar summoned the magicians, enchanters, sorcerers, and

27. Paul Niskanen, *The Human and the Divine in History*, accessed September 3, 2020, <https://ebookcentral.proquest.com/lib/itsla/reader.action?docID=436771&query=human+in+book+of+daniel>.

astrologers to tell him what he had dreamed. If they cannot tell him what he dreamed and interpret it, he would cut them into pieces and their house turn into a pile of rubble. His question made no sense, and his brutality is terrifying.

The Gentiles valued the city, articles from the temple, and wealth, not people. But the book of Daniel shows us that God values people. He saved his people from the cruel human kings when they need him. Although these Gentile kings may seem powerful, they are actually tools used by God to discipline his people.

3.5.7. Human Being Humble

People receive divine revelation, but still do not understand. Daniel can interpret Nebuchadnezzar's dreams, but he still needs to ask one of those who standing there about the four beasts' meaning. Why didn't God let Daniel fully understand? The researcher thinks this is to make Daniel humble. Besides, the angel is next to him, and he can ask questions. As long as he asks questions, he will get a suitable answer.

3.5.8. The Appearing of The Son of Man

After describing the fourth beast, Daniel saw thrones were set in place and the Ancient of Days took his seat. In the vision, before Daniel was one like a Son of Man, coming with the clouds of heaven. He comes "on the clouds of heaven". Daniel told us unmistakably that this was not a man at all, not a human being, but rather that he

was a divine being, a god, who had, however, the appearance of a human being, of a man.²⁸

We have already concluded in the previous passage that this Son of Man is the Messiah, namely, Jesus Christ, Son of God. God did not send another stronger and fiercer monster to conquer the animal-like world. For animals only have the power to destroy rather than to recover. Within this conceptual framework, even though the entire world from the perspective of the narrator has become a den of beasts, Yahweh still sovereignly controls the den and the junglelike politics of human society.²⁹ More importantly, the appearance of the Son of Man shows that God has not given up on mankind. He comes to save and save in the image of human. In an era that is keen to find alien civilizations and alien life, the Son of Man reminds mankind to pay attention to our own humanity once again.

The reason why the one who came on the clouds looks like a man is because he is a real man, everyone should be like Him. Daniel uses animals to describe human kings, which shows their lack of humanity. Their authority will be stripped, and the ruling power will belong to the one who deserves to be called a man. The glorious

28. Julian Morgenstern, *The "Son of Man" of Daniel 7 13 f. A New Interpretation*, accessed September 3, 2020, <https://www.degruyter.com/view/journals/zatw/117/2/article-p249.xml>.

29. Matthew Michael, *Yahweh, the Animal Tamer: Jungles, Wild Animals and Yahweh's Sovereignty in the Apocalyptic Space of Daniel 7:1-28, 6-7*, <http://scriptura.journals.ac.za>.

image of humanity will be restored by him.

Moreover, the one like a Son of Man enables the people of God to participate in the life of God. The Spirit of God humanizes and personalizes us by uniting us with Christ's vicarious humanity in a way that both confirms us in our creaturely reality utterly different from God, and yet also adapts us in our contingent nature for knowledge of God, for communion with God and for fellowship with one another.³⁰ Therefore, the sovereignty, power, and greatness of the kingdoms under the heaven will be handed over to the saints, the people of the Most High. In fact, as followers of Jesus, we are partakers of the life of God.

So there are moments when, as participants in the divine life, we find it necessary to stand apart from the local cultures and loyalties of which we are a part. But we stand apart not as adversaries, but as those whose task is to symbolize the call to participation in the divine life. Even the standing apart, when it is necessary, is part of a longing for the welfare of those among whom God has placed us.³¹

It is worth noting that the image of Son of Man is the only clear human image appearing in Daniel's vision. While Adam is the only person to be created at the beginning, the difference is that Adam, representing all human beings, sinned, and lost the image of God. But the Son of Man was originally God, and was given authority

30. Tim Meadowcroft, "One Like a Son of Man" in the Court of the Foreign King: Daniel 7 as Pointer to wise Participation in the Divine Life. *Journal of Theological Interpretation* 10.2 (2016): 259, accessed January 8, 2021.

31. *Ibid.*, 262.

and glory in the image of man. For the researcher, the Son of Man is not a humble style used by God, but a lifted demonstration of human value to mankind.

3.5.9. A United World

The Son of Man was given authority, glory, and sovereign power; all peoples, nations and men of every language worshiped him. In his kingdom, all distinctions of race, color, and nationality have been removed, and the one who is like the Son of Man represents the entire human race. According to this scripture (Daniel 7:14), the Son of Man belongs to all human beings to worship, not only for Israel. In other words, salvation is for the entire world. Chinese traditional religions are tailor-made for the Chinese people and lack universal value. For the Chinese, Christianity is generally regarded as a Western belief. However, Daniel's vision clearly states that there are God's people in every nation and every race, and only God will take care of the people he creates.

It also conveys the concept that everyone is equal before God, and no one is born superior to others. Moreover, people do have their own races, nationalities, and colors. But what we have in common is much more than the differences. Further, it is worth noting that God will not remove the differences among humans. People could maintain their identity and diversity and worship together.

God's reign offers humans something common that brings them together, namely, they are all equal humans before God regardless of their race, ethnicity, gender, sexuality, or socioeconomic status. At the same time, the kingdom of God does not attempt to make its

members identical with each other. The members of the kingdom of God are called to embrace and celebrate cultural, linguistic, and racial differences, creating a beautiful mosaic of a community that seeks to worship God and to serve other human beings who are both within and outside of their faith community.³²

All people originate from one, and they also belong to one, and the original goal to govern the world is also accomplished in this man-like person.³³ Unity includes equality and diversity. As Paul said in Ephesians 4:13, people will reach unity in the faith and in the knowledge of the Son of God and become mature, attaining to the whole measure of the fullness of Christ.

3.5.10. *This is My Father's World*

It seems like the politics of human society have become a wild habitat. Daniel is not the only one who was brought into the lion's den, but the whole world, especially the people of God. When the Son of Man comes with the clouds of heaven, a new world will begin.

In Isaiah 11, the prophet depicts a beautiful picture that the predator and prey live together, and beasts will be harmless for humans, for the earth will be full of the knowledge of the LORD as the waters cover the sea.

32. Safwat Marzouk, *Monstrous Empires and the Kingdom of God: What Do Monsters Reveal about the Empire?*

<https://www.ctsnet.edu/at-this-point/monstrous-empires-kingdom-god-monsters-reveal-empire-2/>

33. George Eldon Ladd, *A Theology of the New Testament* (Michigan: William B. Eerdmans Publishing Company, 1993), 172.

When the Messiah is in power, all anxiety, danger, hostility, and evil will be completely removed. The human-God and human-human relationship will be restored. Animals will be harmless for mankind. This is God's intention for this world. All people in tribulation will be full of hope when they remember God's great promise, just like the Israelites at that time. But this bright future will come at a price.

3.6. The Danielic and Chinese Concept of Humanity

The animal-like human world described by Daniel is not strange for Chinese readers. Chinese regard equality and harmony between people as a beautiful ideal, but it has never been realized.

In ancient times, Chinese believe that people are born unequal, and the fate of everyone is controlled by "heaven". But "heaven" is a vague concept. Therefore, the emperor, as the Son of Heaven, represents "heaven" on the ground. In the context of Chinese culture, the four beasts in Daniel would be the sons of heaven. No matter how cruel the kings are, people must accept and obey them because "heaven" has chosen them.

Chinese people worship the dragon, and emperors are named "the true dragon and son of heaven". Most experts now believe that the dragon has the body of snake, the head of pig, the horns of deer, the ears of cow, the whiskers of sheep, the claws of eagle, and the scales of fish, which is more complicated than Daniel's vision. As a

matter of fact, although emperors are “the true dragon and son of heaven”, most of them are weak and short-lived, either be killed by enemies or by themselves.

Kings like Nebuchadnezzar would be ashamed in front of many Chinese emperors because he is not cruel enough. To guarantee their supreme power, the emperors cannot have the emotions and feelings of ordinary people. In Chinese history, there are many emperors who are more tyrannical than Nebuchadnezzar. Not only the emperor, but the ministers are also ruthless. In order to survive, Chinese people have to practice endurance, and people who can tolerate are considered successful.

Today’s Chinese society is more complicated and contradictory than in the ancient times. Some rulers vigorously advocated equality for all on the one hand, while unscrupulously grabbing public resources. In some extreme social issues, the animality of certain rulers is fully exposed. But in the wild habitat, will the predator have mercy on the prey?

The book of Daniel was completed approximately in the Eastern Zhou Dynasty in China. Although there are different situations and backgrounds, Daniel’s vision also applies to Chinese society, and is not restricted by time.

Chapter 4

The Son of Man in Mark's Gospel

Many Chinese Christians just take Son of Man as one of Jesus' names, and pay little attention to the difference among Son of Man, Son of God, Messiah, Christ, and so on. On the other hand, the term Son of Man is not very recognized in Chinese language environment.

However, Son of Man is a name selected by Jesus himself and he fully understood the meaning of it. In a certain sense, the Son of Man is the characteristic title of Jesus. It reminds us of the union of God and man, and the noble roots of mankind. Moreover, this term is special when such a common title is used to name God. As a Chinese reader, the researcher is interested in what Jesus will reveal through this title. She will study Marcan view of humanity embodied through Son of Man in Mark's Gospel and compare it with Chinese concept of humanity.

4.1. Mark's Gospel

Current readers are generally told that Mark's Gospel is the first completed Gospel, but the precedence of Mark's Gospel is a relatively recent point of view. It was until 18th century, more and more people of the Protestant believe that both Matthew and Luke used the materials of Mark's Gospel, which is almost a widely accepted view today. As the first completed Gospel, what Mark allows us to see is the

unreflective, sometimes superficial insights of the first generation of Christians, and to enter the oral tradition that can be traced back to the years when Jesus served on earth.¹

Mark is the shortest and most compact of the four Gospels. In the first verse, “The beginning of the gospel about Jesus Christ, the Son of God” Mark has clarified his purpose of writing this book.

The word gospel has other meanings besides the meaning of information or documents. It was originally used to indicate an "epoch-making event", which means that this is a major event that will change the history of the world. For example, in secular literature, the birth of Augustus who will be emperor in the future is called the gospel.²

Mark regarded the gospel as good news, but he also announced a major event, and because of it, the evolution of world history will be completely different from the previous one.

Although this book is short, it emphasizes Jesus’ performing miracles, healing the sick, and casting out demons more than other gospels. Of the 678 verses of the book, nearly one third (198 verses) are records of miracles.³ The miracles manifest

1. Alan Cole, *Tyndale New Testament Commentaries: Mark* (Taipei: Campus Evangelical Fellowship Press, 2002), 55.

2. Donald English, *The Message of Mark: The Mystery of Faith* (Taipei: Campus Evangelical Fellowship Press, 2004), 17.

3. Lamar Jr. Williamson, *A Bible Commentary for Teaching and Preaching: Interpretation Mark* (Taipei: Taiwan Church Press, 2012), 29.

God's mercy, powerful presence, and rule to proclaim the kingdom of God.

But what attracts the researcher most and leads her to pick Mark's Gospel to explore the humanity of Jesus is there is no other Gospel that can fully portray the human nature of Jesus like Mark. In this book, the readers can find Jesus is subjected to the limitations of his humanity. He could be tired, disappointed, and angry. In details, Mark's depiction of Jesus' humanity is more precise. Both Matthew and Mark narrated the little children and Jesus. Matthew's description is: "when he had placed his hands on them, he went on from there (Matthew 19:15)." Mark added one more sentence: "and he took the children in his arms, put his hands on them and blessed them (Mark 10:16)." In the section of teaching the disciples who is the greatest, only Mark mentioned that Jesus took the child in his arms. We can see that Jesus' life is like ours, full of human actions and emotions.

Marks's Gospel falls naturally into two halves. The first is concerning Jesus' ministry in Galilee (1:1-8:26), and the second his journey to Jerusalem and his passion there (8:27-16:8).⁴

Mark's Gospel reaches the first climax with Peter's confession of Jesus' Messiahship at Caesarea Philippi. The second climax is the confession of the centurion who stood in front of Jesus of the crucifixion. Through these two

4. James R. Edwards, *The Pillar New Testament Commentary: The Gospel According to Mark* (Michigan: William B. Eerdmans Publishing Company, 2002), 20.

confessions, uttered by representatives of Israel and Gentile world respectively, Mark witnessed the faith which supports his documents.

4.2. The Marcan View of Humanity

More than 2,000 years have passed since the time when Jesus lived, and the world has changed a lot, but people's suffering and weakness is no different. From the various characters described by Mark, the researcher has found the following aspects of the Marcan view of man.

4.2.1. The Demon-Possessed People

Mark dedicates more of his account to Jesus' miracles than any of the other Gospel authors, and most of them are related to casting out evil spirits. Mark's Gospel records demonic possession most vividly. We can see them in 1:21-28, 1:32-34, 1:39, 3:15, 3:22-30, 5:1-20, 6:49, 7:24-30, 9:14-27, 9:28-29, 9:38, 16:9, 16:17. The Chinese think that people will become ghosts after death, and ghosts often appear at night, so Chinese people dare not go to the graveyard at night because there will be too many ghosts around. Obviously, this perception is wrong. These ghosts are messengers of Satan. After they followed Satan and rebelled against God, they became demons.

In Mark's Gospel, Jesus' first exorcism is in a synagogue. Being possessed by a ghost is not a pleasant experience, but a demon-possessed person was able to

worship in the synagogue without any sense of incongruity until he met Jesus, and he was obviously not willing to be released from his pain at first.⁵ This man's reaction revealed his tragic situation from another angle, that is, not only did he lose the image as a person, but also, he was numb to a point that he hoped to be used by ghosts. This miracle allows us to see that people often enjoy sin.

4.2.2. The Sick People

In addition to casting out demons, Jesus also healed many sick people. Some people may think that Jesus lived 2,000 years ago, and the medical level at that time was limited, so it is not surprising that there were so many patients. But the fact is that with the improvement of medical ability, the number of diseases has not decreased, but increased. If the writing time of the Bible is changed to modern society, I am afraid that it will not only record leprosy, paralysis, and bleeding, but will also include AIDS, cancer, and Covid-19.

Getting sick is not terrible, but terrible if it cannot be treated. Like the sick woman in 5:25-34. She had suffered a great deal under the care of many doctors and had spent all she had, yet instead of getting better she grew worse. These doctors may be real and good doctors, but they are not able to cure her. Now, she is a sick and poor

5. Alan Cole, *Tyndale New Testament Commentaries: Mark* (Taipei: Campus Evangelical Fellowship Press, 2002), 114.

woman. The Chinese say that there is no filial son before the long-time hospital bed. In poor rural areas of China, many sick elderly people seek relief by suicide, and they think this is a wise choice. In recent years, there are at least 100,000 elderly people over 55 years old die by suicide each year, accounting for 36% of the annual suicide population. The elderly has become the population with the highest suicide rate in China.⁶

The diseases depicted in the Gospels are not only physical diseases but also have spiritual symbolic meaning. Thinking from this perspective, no one is healthy. So, Jesus comes. The patients he treated were cured immediately, without any recovery period, and there was no relapse or misdiagnosis after the cure.

4.2.3. The Weakness and Betrayal

In Mark 14:27-31, Jesus predicts Peter will disown him three times before the rooster crows twice. But Peter declared that even if all fall away, he will not and even if he must die with Jesus, he will not disown him.

However, when Jesus was arrested and tried before the Sanhedrin, Peter disowns him. Peter's three denials of the Lord are different from each other.

For the first time, he pretended to ignore people's question (Mark 14:68, I do not know or understand what you are talking about), then denied that he was a member of the

6. Lei Xin, *Many Old People Committed Suicide, to Reduce the Burden on Their Children*, <http://news.sina.com.cn/s/2013-12-13/102928975723.shtml>.

fellowship of Christ (Mark 14:70, he denied that he is one of them), and finally denied that he had any relationship with Jesus (Mark 14:71, I do not know the man you are talking about).⁷

Peter is not the only one who fall away, because Jesus' prophecy is that you will all fall away. After Jesus was arrested, the disciples did desert him and fled (Mark 14:50). Peter is the representative of the disciples, the spokesperson of the whole group, not only represents the spiritual strength of the disciples, but also their weakness. Even the ones who listen and live together with the Lord for three and a half years will fall, so no one can boast of their faith in the Lord. Mark placed the story of Peter's failure between the story of Jesus' trial, vividly contrasting Jesus' loyalty with Peter's infidelity.

On the issue of loyalty, the Chinese are very contradictory. On the one hand, loyalty is a virtue that is encouraged and affirmed in Chinese culture. It has become an ideological trick for leaders to educate their subordinates. In other words, regardless of whether the leader's decision is correct or not, his subordinates should be unconditionally loyal. On the other hand, people are also making excuses for their infidelity, thinking that betrayal is sometimes right. Overall, the correctness of loyalty depends entirely on one's own needs and interests. The object of loyalty can only be God. Because only God is absolutely right and good.

7. Lamar Jr. Williamson, *A Bible Commentary for Teaching and Preaching: Interpretation Mark* (Taipei: Taiwan Church Press, 2012), 365.

Peter was forgiven and later became a wonderful gospel messenger. Peter's repenting and forgiveness brings hope to Christians who share the same experience with him.

4.2.4. Who is Greater?

There are two records in Mark's Gospel concerning the status of the disciples. One is in 9:33-37, where the disciples argued over who is greater, and the second is in 10:35-45. John and James asked Jesus to let one of them sit at his left and the other at his right.

Who is the biggest among them? This is the subject of their fierce debate. Jesus did not despise their desire to be the greatest and sat down very seriously to guide them. But his definition of greatness reversed the understanding of the world and completely challenged people's basic hypothesis of success.

Jesus took a child in his arms and taught the disciples that the greatest person is the one who is willing to serve. In the world at that time, the social status of children was extremely humble. The symbolic meaning of a child applies to anyone in need, especially to those new disciples. Because the twelve disciples believed that Jesus belonged to them, and it was right for them to forbid outsiders to cast out demons in Jesus' name. Not long after Jesus' first teaching, John and James requested Jesus to let one of them sit at his left and the other at his right in his glory. This request came after

Jesus predicted three times that he would suffer and die, and the two brothers imagined the glory that would come and planned to win a privileged position. The other ten disciples may be better than John and James, but when they knew what John and James had requested, they became angry because they also wanted to win that position for themselves.

On the one hand, the 12 disciples resisted the newcomers from outside to consolidate the interests of their group. They also fought each other internally to maximize their own interests, which is familiar to a modern readers' life.

According to Chinese secular standards, the one who has strongest family background, who has older qualifications, who has higher degrees, who has a good relationship with the leaders, who has more funds, who has strong weapons, is greater. But Jesus challenged this basic value system and success criteria. God's standard is whoever wants to become great must be servant, and whoever wants to be first must be slave of all.

4.2.5. The Story of Pilate

The religious leaders decided to destroy Jesus because Jesus challenged the privileged position they enjoyed. The crowd only knew how to use violence, making Jesus the object of mockery and torture. There was another person, Pilate, who wanted to dismiss the condemnation of the crowd, but condemned Jesus to death to

meet the demands of the crowd. The crimes committed by religious leaders and the crowd are obvious. It is the case of Pilate that makes the researcher think more.

During the trial, Pilate went straight to the subject: Are you the king of the Jews? He used a term different from the one used by the high priest. Pilate wanted to find out if Jesus tried to rebel against the Roman Empire. Perhaps this is “the many things” the chief priest accused him of.⁸ Pilate believed that Jesus was innocent. He knew that it was out of envy that the chief priest handed Jesus over to him. However, he sentenced Jesus to please the crowd. In Pilate's time, the Roman authorities often used gentle policies to appease stubborn mobs.⁹ Pilate had the authority of the state, but he did not execute the judgment he believed to be correct.

A similar situation exists in the modern time. Take the legalization of homosexuality as an example. At present, 29 countries in the world have legally enforced same-sex marriage nationwide or not yet nationwide. Most of these countries are developed countries. On the surface, this is a major advancement in human rights. It seems that people have more freedom. Scientific American released an article on August 29, 2019 arguing that analysis of half a million people suggests genetics may

8. Donald English, *The Message of Mark: The Mystery of Faith* (Taipei: Campus Evangelical Fellowship Press, 2004), 305.

9. Lamar Jr. Williamson, *A Bible Commentary for Teaching and Preaching: Interpretation Mark* (Taipei: Taiwan Church Press, 2012), 371.

have a limited contribution to sexual orientation.¹⁰ Assuming that homosexuality is born, the natural ratio should be relatively stable. Then how to explain the increasing number of homosexuals? And how to understand bisexuality? Since this problem is not born, then it is caused by acquired factors. In the researcher's opinion, this is just a replica of the story of Pilate. Because the leaders do not know how to solve such social problems, but they want to win this group's support instead of angering them, so they simply put the cloak of legalization on it to cover up the ugliness.

The interaction between the crowd who shouted for the crucifixion of Jesus and Pilate is the same as the cooperation between the people who claim rights for homosexuality and some politicians.

4.2.6. The Parable of the Dog in Syrophoenician Woman's Story

When Jesus went to the vicinity of Tyre, a Gentile place, a Syrophoenician woman whose little daughter was possessed by an evil spirit came and begged Jesus to drive the demon out of her daughter. Her prostration at Jesus' feet was a mark of deep respect as well as of profound grief. However, Jesus' answer was disappointing. He replied, "First let the children eat all they want, for it is not right to take the

10. Sarah Reardon, *Massive Study Finds No Single Genetic Cause of Same-Sex Sexual Behavior*, accessed January 15, 2021, <https://www.scientificamerican.com/article/massive-study-finds-no-single-genetic-cause-of-same-sex-sexual-behavior/>.

children's bread and toss it to their dogs."

The Greeks liked to use dogs to describe the shameless woman, like the English word "bitch". The Jews also regarded dogs as shameless and despicable, and sometimes used dogs as a metaphor for Gentiles, thinking they were shameful. Some scholars pointed out that the dog Jesus was talking about was a pet dog. But no matter how to explain the dog, it must be a shame to compare people to dogs.

His reluctance to act immediately on the woman's behalf may be due to the fact that in the Hellenistic world in the first century there may be many miracle-workers who attracted popular followings. In Galilee Jesus had been regarded as one of these divine men and the crowds had thronged him for his benefactions. The power of God, however, is properly released not in a context of superstition and magic but in response to faith. Jesus therefore put before the woman an enigmatic statement to test her faith.¹¹

When we discussed the book of Daniel in the third chapter of this thesis, we mentioned that human society is not much different from an animal habitat. Jesus also used pigs and dogs to describe the nature of people in Matthew 7:6. Jesus's teaching is, "Do not give dogs what is sacred; do not throw your pearls to pigs. If you do, they may trample them under their feet, and then turn and tear you to pieces." Humans have been attacking each other all the time. Maybe not everyone can be as fierce and terrible as the four beasts in Daniel, so Jesus used pigs and dogs to describe most people.

11. William L. Lane, *The New International Commentary on the New Testament: The Gospel of Mark* (Michigan: William B. Eerdmans Publishing Company, 1974), 262.

This woman readily accepted the humble status of Gentiles, and even in this case, she still sought medical treatment for her daughter. For Jesus, what her answer revealed was not her cleverness, but the depth of her faith.

4.2.7. The Hope of Recovery

People live in the pitiful situation of sin. Some people even take pleasure in sin, but there are still some people who long to be forgiven and restored. The man with leprosy is a good example.

Both Mark and Luke include this miracle and Luke gives more details to show that it happened in a town and the man was covered with leprosy. Leprosy is an infectious disease that causes severe, disfiguring skin sores and nerve damage in the arms, legs, and skin areas around the body.¹² People with leprosy must be quarantined, and in the eyes of the Jews, lepers are unclean. He was covered with leprosy, indicating that his disease has reached an advanced stage. We do not know whether he knew in advance that Jesus was coming, or he was looking for Jesus. Maybe he just happened to meet Jesus, but at least he did not give up and took the initiative to look for opportunities.

Moreover, what he said to Jesus is even more profound. He said, “Lord, if you

12. Brunilda Nazario, *Leprosy*, accessed January 18, 2021, <https://www.webmd.com/skin-problems-and-treatments/guide/leprosy-symptoms-treatments-history#1>.

are willing, you can make me clean.” In other words, he knew Lord has the right to say no. This is a great manifestation of his faith, which many people who have believed in the Lord for many years do not understand.

Facing such a miserable man, Jesus reached out a hand to touch him before he was cleaned. Jesus could touch him after he was cleaned, but he touched when this man was still disgusting. For the researcher, this is the most beautiful picture in this world. His story encourages people not to give up on themselves. Even at the last moment, there is still hope of recovery.

4.2.8. Jesus’ Temptation as a Human Being

After Jesus was baptized, at once, the Holy Spirit sent him out into the desert, and he was in the desert for forty days, being tempted by Satan. He was with the wild animals, and angels attended him.

Only Jesus in this passage is a human being. The other four roles are: The Holy Spirit, Satan, beasts, and angels. They resemble the role distribution in the Garden of Eden but moved to the wilderness. For the Hebrews, the wilderness was a terrifying and dark place, a dwelling place for demons and unclean beasts.¹³ Israel was in the wilderness forty years, Moses was on Mt. Sinai forty days and nights, and

13. Alan Cole, *Tyndale New Testament Commentaries: Mark* (Taipei: Campus Evangelical Fellowship Press, 2002), 110.

Elijah was led for forty days and nights to Mt. Horeb. In each instance the wilderness was a proving ground, a test of faithfulness, and a promise of deliverance.¹⁴

It was the Holy Spirit who urged Jesus to enter the wilderness. During the temptation, angels supported him. This shows that God's intention is to protect rather than destroy. There are wild beasts in the wilderness, just as God closed the lion's mouth and saved his servant Daniel. God also kept his beloved son from the beasts.

For the researcher, the forty days Jesus spent with wild beasts in the wilderness is a preparation for his ministry. Because human society is not safer than the animal world. Those who are healed and cast out demons by Jesus, their lives are no better than the weakest animals in the animal world. The high priests, Pilate, soldiers, and crowds who sent Jesus to the cross are no more human than beasts.

After Jesus overcame temptation, he began his ministry. He called the disciples, and immediately began to teach people in the synagogue and heal the sick and cast out demons. This is different from the views and practices in traditional Chinese religions. Both Buddhism and Taoism in China advocate staying away from the crowd. They regard worldly things as something that should be discarded. If they cannot, it means that they do not know the truth deep enough. This idea of being far away from the world proves the selfishness of false beliefs. In the Chinese philosophy

14. James R. Edwards, *The Pillar New Testament Commentary: The Gospel According to Mark* (Michigan: William B. Eerdmans Publishing Company, 2002), 40.

of life, there is a habit of ignoring the interests of others, which is also reflected in traditional religions. Holding on to yourself instead of giving generously is the cultural shackles that Chinese Christians need to get rid of.

4.2.9. Jesus, the Bread of Life

Among the miracles that Jesus performed, only the feeding of five thousand people was recorded in the four Gospels. Mark also recorded the miracle of feeding four thousand people.

Readers must remember that in the Garden of Eden, when God cursed mankind, he said, “Cursed is the ground because of you; through painful toil you will eat of it all the days of your life.....By the sweat of your brow you will eat your food until you return to the ground.....” All the five thousand and four thousand people in the feeding miracle got enough food without labor. The man-made food can only maintain people’s physiological needs, and we must eat every day. In some difficult areas or periods, it is even difficult to maintain the physiological needs. The miracle of five loaves and two fish shows that God’s supply is the reason for the continuous operation of the human world, and his supply is always sufficient, more than we need.

The Chinese say that there is no free lunch in the world, but in fact, there is. We should not ignore the fact that Jesus’ compassion for the crowd came from deep of

his heart. He taught them spiritually and fed them physically.¹⁵ Just as Jesus declared in John 6:35, “I am the bread of life. He who comes to me will never go hungry, and he who believes in me will never be thirsty.”

4.3. Jesus, the Son of Man in Mark’s Gospel

Jesus has four identities in Mark’s Gospel, Son of God, Son of David, Christ, and Son of Man. However, the Son of God, the Son of David, and Christ are all titles associated with the king of Jerusalem, only the Son of Man is different. This term has nothing to do with the religious system or internal affairs of the Jewish culture.¹⁶ Meanwhile, the title which Jesus uses most frequently to name himself and express his mission is the Son of Man, fourteen times in Mark’s Gospel. In 8:31, after Peter’s confession of Christ, when Jesus began to talk about his future experience, he immediately changed the title of Son of Man instead of Messiah. When Jesus was tried, he admitted that he was Christ, but he explained the title with the coming of the Son of Man straightway. At the heart of the gospel, when Jesus predicted his death three times, he used the title of Son of Man.

With the gradual development of the gospel story, the image of Jesus changed from being an almighty master to a humble, obedient, and suffering servant. His disciples, crowds,

15. Donald English, *The Message of Mark: The Mystery of Faith* (Taipei: Campus Evangelical Fellowship Press, 2004), 182.

16. Ibid., 18.

and enemies could hardly see this. This is exactly what Mark wants readers to pay attention to.¹⁷

When Jesus replaces "I" with the Son of Man, the scriptures show that he and his words have a deeper implication.

As a son of carpenter, Jesus is not from a famous family. He grew up in Nazareth, a humble town. "Nazareth! Can anything good come from there?" (John 1:46) From the perspective of the Gentile world, Jesus' origin and growing environment determined that he is an insignificant person. At most, he is a good rabbi with some supernatural healing abilities, but the abilities could not save him from being humiliated and crucified.

According to human logic, if people promote a new superstar or product, we will emphasize the advantage and perfection of the person or item. Jesus is already a "nobody" in his time. What he needed to do was to promote himself into fame with a glamorous title. However, the title he chooses is Son of Man. What he did was completely contrary to human logic and common sense.

Jewish people do understand that Son of Man represent Messiah. But for most of them, the Messiah is more like a warlike Davidic king, a victorious hero, a heavenly judge, and ruler who will deliver righteousness from the oppressors and

17. Donald English, *The Message of Mark: The Mystery of Faith* (Taipei: Campus Evangelical Fellowship Press, 2004), 22.

bring glory for Israel. What the Son of Man Jesus shows to the world is a brand-new Son of Man, and a true Son of Man

4.3.1. The Origin of Son of Man in Mark's Gospel

In the book *Jesus Son of Man*, George S. Duncan insisted that Jesus took the concept of Son of Man from Ezekiel. His argument is based on the fact that the term Son of Man appears repeatedly in Ezekiel. According to J.Y. Campbell, he believes that Jesus' self-proclaimed Son of Man is like Ezekiel, which shows his prophetic consciousness.

But Hans Conzelmann believes that Ezekiel is not suitable for explaining the historical resource for this title, because in Ezekiel 2:1, the prophet Ezekiel is just called a man.¹⁸ Most British Bible scholars like T. W. Manson believe that the Son of Man is taken from the book of Daniel. But he reads the Son of Man in Daniel as a collective personality and Jesus' understanding of this title has both collective and individual perspective.

Because Daniel 7:13 is the only verse in Old Testament which is close to Jesus' future Son of Man promise in Gospels. When it comes to the Old Testament background of Son of Man, the verse that is most thought of and valued is Daniel

18. Hans Conzelmann, *An outline of the theology of the New Testament* (New York:Harper & Row, 1968), 132.

7:13.

We need to distinguish two kinds of textual similarity: one is allusion, and the other is two authors use same vocabularies coincidentally. Jesus does not mention Daniel by name so that we can only notice his quotation by recognizing the markers which point back to Daniel 7:13. Marker is “an identifiable element or pattern in one text belonging to another independent text”, and what the evoked text has is the marked.

Table 1: The Markers in Mark 14:62 and the Marked in Daniel 7:13

Mark 14:62	I am, said Jesus. And you will see the Son of Man sitting at the right hand of the Mighty One and coming on the clouds of heaven .
Daniel 7:13	In my vision at night I looked, and there before me was one like a Son of Man, coming with the clouds of heaven . He approached the Ancient of Days and was led into his presence.

Many similarities can be noted between Daniel 7:13 and Mark 14:62. They share three key subjects: Son of Man, coming with clouds, and the Ancient of Days or the Mighty One. Jesus split up the first sentence of Daniel into two parts and separate them by a verse: sitting at the right hand of the Mighty One, which quoted from Psalm 110:1. If we ignore the inserted verse of Psalm 110:1, Jesus quoted exactly Daniel 7:13a in the same word order. So, the split-up pattern helps the readers to confirm that the similarity between Daniel 7:13 and Mark 14:62 results from Jesus’ deliberate use of the older text rather than coincidence.

4.3.1.1. The Model of Allusion and Influence

In general, there are two broad categories to study the relationship among texts, one is oriented toward “intertextuality”, the other toward “allusion and influence”.

Intertextuality encompasses manifold connections between a text being studied and the other texts, or between a text being studied and commonplace phrases or figures from the linguistic or cultural systems in which the text exists.¹⁹ The problem is this model makes critics ignore important parts of the text at hand. But the “influence” and “allusion” approach focus on how one composition evokes its antecedents, how one author is affected by another, and what sources a text utilizes.²⁰ So, the researcher will utilize the model of allusion and influence to study the relationship between Daniel 7:13 and Mark 14:62.

4.3.1.2. The Ben-Porat’s Four-Stages Analysis

Allusion is, as Earl Miner defines, “tacit reference to another literary work, to another art, to history, to contemporary figures, or the like.” According to Miner, allusion requires “an echo of sufficiently familiar yet distinctive and meaningful elements” and “an audience sharing the tradition with the poet.” As used in literary

19. Benjamin D. Sommer, *A Prophet Reads Scripture: Allusion in Isaiah 40-66* (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1998), 7.

20. Ibid., 6.

criticism, the term influence designates the affiliative relations between past and present literary texts and/or their authors.²¹ Ben-Porat's four-stages analysis is extremely helpful to recognize an allusion.

First, we must find the marker and marked. Although the Ancient of Days and the Mighty One are not identical, they are both honorific titles of God. We can easily find out the three markers in Mark 14:62 and the three marked in Daniel 7:13 (see Table 1).

The second stage to recognize the allusion is to identify the evoked text. Even for modern readers, because of the high degree of similarity between these two verses, we immediately recall Daniel 7:13. In Mark's Gospel, the man who asks Jesus "Are you the Christ, the Son of the Blessed One" is the high priest. He is the highest religious leader of Judaism and proficient in Jewish tradition. When Jesus answered "I am" and connected Messiah with Son of God and the heavenly figure Son of Man, the high priest tore his clothes and blamed Jesus' response as blasphemy. This means the high priest knew what information Jesus delivered and Daniel 7 is probably the evoked text.

The third stage is the modification of the interpretation of the sign in the alluding text. It means the reader could bring some elements from the marked to

21. Ibid., 14.

understand the alluding text. If Daniel did not refer to the Son of Man in his vision, then Jesus' claim that he is the Son of Man and coming on the clouds of heaven would not be so impressive. This claim is the only answer from Jesus in the Sanhedrin. At another time, he remained silent and gave no answer. When people recall the Son of Man as prophesied in Daniel, they will remember the suffering history of Israel and the faithful promise of God. It is worth noting that in reference to the Son of Man, the audience probably first remembered the warlike Davidic King. But Jesus in front of them is not a conquering king at all. This strong contrast will also lead the audience to rethink their familiar traditions.

When readers recall the marked text, they will connect the whole evoked text with the alluding text besides the marker and marked phrases and passages, and this is the fourth stage. The third and fourth stages are related to the author's purpose of borrowing the earlier text.

4.3.1.3. The Purpose of Jesus' Allusion

According to Sommer, allusion forms one of the most common categories of inner-biblical exegesis and aggadic exegesis. Jesus borrows the older vocabulary from Daniel to make his own message readily understood. Jesus' Son of Man is dependent on and oriented toward Daniel 7:13, without which it cannot exist, but it also has a formal independence. By reusing the wording found in Daniel, Jesus asserts that the

predictions found in them have been fulfilled.

Moreover, Jesus' exegesis does not take the place of Daniel 7:13. It is relevant primarily because Daniel 7:13 is available and needs explication. On the contrary, if Daniel 7:13 was not read, Jesus' exegesis would be pointless. In fact, by clarifying or updating the meaning of the text under consideration, Jesus' exegesis may help preserve Daniel 7:13 and give it ongoing validity.

Furthermore, some scholars believe that the order of recording in Daniel 7:13 and Mark 14:62 is different. In Daniel 7:13, the Son of Man came with the clouds of heaven and then was led to the Ancient of Days. But in Mark 14:62, the Son of Man sits at the right hand of the Mighty One and then comes on the cloud of heaven. This is because they see the Mighty One and the Son of Man as two images. Such questions were asked by the disciples of Jesus 2000 years ago. Philip asked Jesus to show them the Father and that would be enough for them. But Jesus replied that anyone who has seen him has seen the Father. He also explained to Nicodemus that no one has ever gone into heaven except the one who came from heaven---the Son of Man. Therefore, the Son of Man and the Mighty One are one. It is meaningless to discuss the order in which the Son of Man meets the Mighty One.

4.3.2. Jesus' Saying of Son of Man in Mark

In Mark's Gospel, there are 13 records of Jesus' teaching about the Son of Man,

of which seven mention the Passion, Death and Resurrection of the Son of Man.

4.3.2.1. Three Groups of Jesus' Son of Man Sayings

The Son of Man sayings could be categorized into three groups (see Table 2):

the authoritative sayings, the suffering Son of Man, and the glory of Son of Man.

Table 2: Jesus' Sayings of Son of Man in Mark's Gospel

A. The Authoritative Sayings	
2:10	But that you may know that the Son of Man has authority on earth to forgive sins.
2:28	So the Son of Man is Lord even for the Sabbath.
B. Suffering of Son of Man	
8:31	He then began to teach them that the Son of Man must suffer many things and be rejected by the elders, chief priests, and teachers of the law, and that he must be killed and after three days rise again.
9:12	Jesus replied, "To be sure, Elijah does come first, and restores all things. Why then is it written that the Son of Man must suffer much and be rejected?"
9:31	He said to them, "The Son of Man is going to be betrayed into the hands of men. They will kill him, and after three days he will rise."
10:33	"We are going up to Jerusalem," he said, "and the Son of Man will be betrayed to the chief priests and teachers of law. They will condemn him to death and will hand him over to the Gentiles.
10:45	For even the Son of Man did not come to be served, but to serve, and to give his life as a ransom for many.
14:21	The Son of Man will go just as it is written about him, but woe to that man who betrays the Son of Man! It would be better for him if he had not been born.
14:41	Look, the Son of Man is betrayed into the hands of sinners.
C. Glory of Son of Man	
8:38	If anyone is ashamed of me and my words in this adulterous and sinful generation, the Son of Man will be ashamed of him when he comes in his Father's glory with the holy angels.
9:9	As they were coming down the mountain, Jesus gave them orders not to tell anyone what they had seen until the Son of Man had risen from the dead.
13:26	At that time men will see the Son of Man coming in clouds with great power and glory.
14:62	"I am," said Jesus. "And you will see the Son of Man sitting at the right hand of Mighty One and coming on the clouds of heaven."

4.3.2.2. The Suffering Son of Man

It can be seen from Table 2 that the suffering Son of Man has the highest proportion of Jesus' sayings about the Son of Man.

Mowinckel argues that Judaism has no idea about suffering and dying Messiah. "In the time of Jesus, the thought of a suffering and dying messiah was quite alien to the normal Jewish view. For many it was not merely incomprehensible, but offensive."²² Some scholars believe Son of Man in Daniel 7 is an exalted and heavenly figure, and there is no suffering at all. As for the famous suffering servant figure in Isaiah 53, Hooker identifies him to be Israel, to remove the difficulty of the idea of resurrection. Some other scholars argue that the idea of suffering of the Messiah does occur in Judaism, but it is different from the meaning in Christianity:

The suffering is associated with the danger and the exertions which are the lot of the messiah in the war with the heathen, and with the throws of the messianic age, the last great affliction which will befall all the pious, and sometimes with the period during which the messiah is still hidden, unknown, misunderstood.²³

However, the *4 Ezra* mentioned the Messiah must die like all other men.

Similitudes of Enoch mentioned the suffering and death of the Son of Man. Even though there is no lack of suffering servant content in the Old Testament like Isaiah 53 and non-Bible material like 1QIsa a 52:14 and Targum Isa 52:13 also show the

22. Sigmund Mowinckel, *He That Cometh* (New York: Abingdon Press, 1956), 329.

23. Ibid., 328.

suffering Messiah, we must agree that the official Judaism at the time of Jesus did not include atoning suffering as a necessary part of the Messiah idea, and that even if one can actually show the existence of the conception of a suffering Messiah, it was at best marginal and weak.²⁴ The hope for a conquering Davidic king has been a relatively core of Messianic expectation in Jesus' time, both in Palestine and in the Diaspora.

The Jewish people absolutely expected the Messiah to appear (Luke 3:15; John 4:29, 7:31). They expected the Messiah come to be the king of David's house. Because Jesus became more and more popular among the people, the Pharisees and the priests worried that this would trigger a political messianic movement.²⁵ At the climax of Jesus' popularity, when Jesus fed the five thousand people and revealed his inherent heavenly power, people intended to make him king by force. Jesus knew that he is the Messiah, but not the kind of Messiah that people had expected. Their Messiah concept needs to be changed. He deliberately avoided the Messiah title because it has a nationalistic meaning to the Jews, and they would misunderstand him.

Jesus borrowed Son of Man from the book of Daniel, which may have not

24. Oscar Cullmann, *The Christology of the New Testament* (Philadelphia: The Westminster Press, 1958), 60.

25. George Eldon Ladd, *A Theology of the New Testament* (Michigan: William B. Eerdmans Publishing Company, 1993), 155.

been used at his time. Meanwhile, this seldom used title gives him space to input new meaning. He combined the suffering servant and Son of Man together. The two apparently contradictory tasks are united perfectly in his ministry and expressed by his life and teaching.

4.4. The Man Jesus

No matter what it means, the Son of Man also points to the true humanity of Jesus. His completeness of humanity is a model for people to follow. Because of the human nature in his own personality, he can build close relationship with all mankind. According to God's command, he is the people's representative before God. Moreover, the title of Son of Man reveals his uniqueness in the three persons of the Trinity.

In the thinking of the Son of the Eternal God, his own characteristics are not divine, because he shares the same divinity with the Father and the Holy Spirit, and shares the omnipresent, eternal life, omniscience, and other divinities; however, the predestined word becoming flesh only belongs to the Son alone, which is his characteristic in the divine organization. Therefore, whenever he mentioned his coming, ascending to heaven, and second coming, he often used the Son of Man.²⁶

In the Mark's Gospel, the Son of Man has authority. He will be resurrected and return in glory. Although the goal of Jesus' first coming is not to achieve the kind of Messiah that the Jews expected, he is really the Messiah.

26. Ibid., 163.

4.4.1. Starting from a Beginner

In the days when Christ lived on earth, apart from sin, he fulfilled all things that are common in human nature. He has human parents, he is the Son of Man, he has human body, soul (Matthew 26:38), and spirit (Mark 2:8). He could be tired (John 4:6), hungry (Luke 4:2), and thirsty (John 19:28).

He started his human life from woman's womb and grew up like all other people. He is the God who is the source of all wisdom and knowledge but went to human school to learn and study the word of God. He worked as a carpenter to support his family. Before starting his ministry, he was baptized by John. After that, he was sent to be tempted. When Satan tempted him to sin, he quoted scriptures to defeat the devil's tricks. Forty days later, while preaching the gospel of God, he called the first disciples, and at the same time continued to heal the sick and cast out demons.

He did not design himself to grow up in an influential family, nor did he turn himself into a celebrity. He is the most ordinary person. What is more precious is that Jesus' step-by-step life record allows us to see that God fully abides by the human rules. He has only been engaged in ministry for three and a half years, but it took him as long as 30 years to complete the process of human growth. We did not see the image of Superman, nor the life of legends, but the ordinary life of ordinary people. Jesus confined himself to the spiritual powers and methods available to all of us and

demonstrated the lifestyle God set for the world.

4.4.2. The Humble Man is Lifted

Because Jesus was a man, he also had weaknesses and would die. Peter not only called Jesus a "man", but also emphasized that he was a "Nazarene" (Acts 2:22). Nazareth was humble, uneducated, and ungodly, and was despised by the Jews. But Peter dared to say that Jesus came from Nazareth.

Paul contrasted Jesus with Adam in Romans 5:18. If Jesus is only God, this contrast is meaningless. Just because Jesus and Adam are both humans, this contrast makes sense. Adam can manage the Garden of Eden by himself, which means he has extremely high wisdom. As the first person created by God, Adam enjoys the highest status among mankind. Contrary to Adam, Jesus is not attractive. However, Adam's disobedience made everyone become sinner, but through the obedience of Jesus, the many could become righteous.

Although the Jews despised Jesus of Nazareth, God used this humble man to perform many miracles and wonders. Because of his obedience, God exalted him to the highest place and gave him the name that is above every name (Philippians 2:9).

According to the traditional view, the name Son of Man indicates the humble humanity of Christ. But the researcher believes that the humanity and divinity of Jesus cannot be understood separately. His divinity and greatness are reflected and revealed

in his humble humanity. In this respect, the Son of Man, the title Jesus deliberately chose, is an exalted name.

4.4.3. A Perfect Man

Some people compare Jesus with Plato, Shakyamuni, Confucius, Muhammad, and others, thinking that he is just one of the great men in the world or the founder of religion. This kind of comparison pulls down the position of Jesus.

Plato's opinions about the family, slavery, and female are incredibly elementary. Shakyamuni broke away from human life, treated people's pain as meaningless, was a recluse in the mountains to meditate on the sins of the world, and let the moral system go to an extremely low point. Although Confucius has summarized the wisdom of the past, his views are mainly people oriented. Muhammad's cruelty made him notorious. None of them can be compared with Jesus.

Jesus is a loving person. He was a guest at the home of the sinner Zacchaeus and saved his family. When He was dying, people laughed at him, but he still loved them and prayed for them.

The Lord Jesus is not only full of love, but also full of compassion and sympathy. He hates wickedness but has compassion for sinners. When the man with leprosy came to beg him, Jesus reached out his hand and touched the man. Jesus could heal him first and then touch him, or he can heal the man without touching him at all.

But, as a person, Jesus was willing to touch this person who had a disgusting contagious skin disease.

Besides, he is an easygoing person. The Samaritan woman could chat with him easily. Poor and rude Galilean fishermen were his students. Mark specifically recorded that Jesus took a little child in his arms. Jesus only had three and a half years to do his ministry in this world. It was hard work to preach the gospel of God in such a short time, but Jesus still served gently. When we read the scriptures, we cannot feel that he is an impatient person. On the contrary, he always worked in an orderly manner, which make those who live after 2000 years feel that we have a personal friendship with him.

In the researcher's opinion, the nine fruits of the Holy Spirit, love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness, and self-control, are most suitable to describe the humanity of Jesus.

4.4.4. The Hope for All

Earlier in this chapter we mentioned that people's lives were bleak at Jesus' time. Many were possessed by demons and diseases were also devastating. People spent all their savings and still were not cured. Peter's failure is a mirror, reflecting the weakness of all of us. When Jesus patiently taught the disciples, they began to forbid outsiders to serve in Jesus' name. After Jesus' three times prediction of his

suffer and die, James and John requested to have a privileged position.

But in some people, it also allows us to see the glorious side of humanity. Just like the Syrophoenician woman. She clearly recognized her status and accepted the identity of a dog. This is the depth of her faith. The leprous man still refused to give up in the final stage of his illness. Jesus gave them the chance. Those disciples who were once timid, unfaithful, and selfish totally changed to be new persons. They preached the gospel everywhere and even became martyrs.

Whether it is people who are in sin without knowing it, or people who are seeking in hardship, Jesus became their hope and only salvation.

He is the true "Son of Man", and completely satisfied God's will. He represented mankind and received the honor and glory God intended to bestow mankind.

When the title "Son of Man" was first quoted in the New Testament, it said "The Son of Man has no place to lay his head." But in Revelation 14:14, the last time it was quoted, the Son of Man has a crown of gold on his head. What a great contrast that is!

4.5. Jesus Fulfills Daniel's Son of Man

Erich Sauer pointed out in his book *The Triumph of the Crucified*: "Son of Man appears more than 80 times in the Gospels, and its roots are in the Book of

Daniel. There, the kingdom of Messiah is described as the kingdom of the Son of Man, in sharp contrast to the world empire of animal nature (lion, bear, leopard, terrible beast, etc.). From the perspective of the Bible, this is the first and only kingdom in history that rules the whole earth with true humanity.”²⁷

Daniel compared human world with the animal habitat. According to his description, God’s people must suffer more and more. The tension between them and the animal world is growing.

However, people admire animals’ superior power and their ruthlessness and coldness. The kings use ferocious animals to show their power. In China, according to Confucianism, ruler guides subject, father guides son and husband guides wife. Therefore, the ruler does not mean the emperor or king alone. There are the shadows of beast kings everywhere.

But the truth is that people are weak. Whether it is the emperors in the book of Daniel, the 12 disciples, or the poor people seeking healing from Jesus, no one is powerful. After the fall, people cannot find the source of true power at all.

God did not send another stronger and fiercer monster to conquer the animal-like world. His solution is to send his begotten son come to the world in the image of the human. In Daniel’s vision, the Son of Man is the only clear human image

27. Erich Sauer, *The Triumph of the Crucified* (Carlisle, UK: The Paternoster Press & Grand Rapids: Eerdmans Publishing Company, 1994), 21-22.

appeared. Compared with divinity, humanity is humble for sure. But the problem is after Adam's failure, Jesus was the first real man, and Jesus' humanity was not disappointing. The appearance of Jesus fulfilled the hope for the Son of Man in Daniel. When the Son of Man comes for the second time, all anxiety, danger, hostility, and evil will be completely removed. He is the prince of peace and the guarantee of humanity.

The Son of Man in Daniel is a revelation, a prophecy, and will be fulfilled when Jesus Christ comes for the second time. The revelation is a gradual process. What Daniel saw was a picture. Although he did not understand that this was Jesus Christ, because of the lack of trinity concept, he still recorded this picture. The God who revealed to Daniel himself confirmed his revelation on earth. In Daniel's time, the revelation of God was not yet complete. But now, it is complete. When we read this book, we can understand more clearly than Daniel the author himself.

4.6. The Marcan and Chinese Concept of Humanity

Jesus is the Son, the second person of the Trinity. The Word became flesh and made his dwelling among us. We have seen his glory, the glory of the One and Only, who came from the Father, full of grace and truth. This shows the importance and preciousness of humanity. People have the image of God, and the coming of Jesus makes it clear what this image is.

There are many stories of gods ascending to or descending from the heaven in Chinese mythology. These stories can be divided into two types. One is for people who comprehend the humanity truth and float outside the world. The other is those heavenly characters who are entrusted to the world because of punishment or mission. The latter group is similar to the literal meaning of “The Word became flesh and made his dwelling among us”. But Jesus’ first coming is not as simple as the immortals’ humble descending. He came to sacrifice himself and give people life, to save the lost, and to lift up humanity. The sky that Chinese people generally worship is a concept that has no personality, no humanity, incomprehensible, and can only be passively accepted. Therefore, Christianity first challenges the Chinese people’s understanding of God’s humanity. God’s humanity is not under the framework of hierarchical system.

For thousands of years, in general, the Chinese have not valued normal people’s life enough. Since the Han Dynasty “deposed a hundred schools and respected Confucianism only”, the feudal dynasties have always had a strict hierarchical system. Because at the level of social relations, it is usually based on the “pan-blood relationship.” The imperial officer is usually regarded as the “parental officer” of the people, and people should call themselves “grass-men” in front of rulers. Under this system, disobedience to the ruling class is equivalent to crime. This is different from the Syrophoenician woman who readily accepted her humble status

as Gentiles. Because the one she is talking to is the holy creator, we sinners are all equally filthy in front of him. However, the hierarchical system which has lasted thousands of years in China is artificially built within the human system.

China is a big country with a large population and relatively rich resources. But the problem is that since historical records, the ruling class has always controlled the wealth of the country, and little has been distributed to the people. The ruling class has wealth, authority, army, weapon, and the right to speak on behalf of the “heaven”. As a result, the Chinese have a survival-oriented personality, which is what animals should have. Unlike the direct robbery of other ethnic groups, the Chinese ruling class will put on a hypocritical ethical cloak when robbing the people, so that people from other countries cannot see what the Chinese people are suffering.

The Chinese have long lost the spirit of resistance and can only passively accept their unfortunate fate. For many Chinese, chronic serious illnesses are almost equivalent to poverty. For those families that are not wealthy, disease is a disaster. Therefore, so many rural elderly people choose to commit suicide to reduce their family burden and preserve their last dignity.

The spirit of repentance is a major contribution of Christianity to mankind, and it is another big challenge for the Chinese. The first thing to do is to see through the fact of Chinese traditional culture and religion in the light of Christianity. Especially through the humanity of Jesus’ incarnation to reconstruct the understanding

of human value. Respect for life includes respect for oneself and for others. In this reconstruction, the first person to have benefit is the one who reflects on their own cultural traps.

China, with such a cultural background, has the fastest growth of Christians in the world. For the Son of Man came to seek and save what was lost. We, the filthy and blind, cannot be saved by ourselves. It is God who reached out his hand first, just like the mercy he granted to the leprous man.

Chapter 5

Conclusion

There is a gradual progress for the Old Testament authors to use the title Son of Man. From the sinful nature of man (Numbers 23:19), to God's chosen people (Psalm 80:17), to God's spokesperson (The book of Ezekiel), and finally to Messiah (Daniel 7:13), the sequence of appearance of the Son of Man in the Old Testament reveals God's miraculous plan of salvation for man.

The heavenly Son of Man in Daniel's vision echoes with the human history in Genesis. The ground is cursed, and the earth is under attack by counter-divine, demonic forces, causing terror and destruction among humans. God did not send another stronger and fiercer "monster" to conquer the world and declare his authority, but his begotten son as a man.

The Model of Allusion and Influence proves that Jesus' Son of Man is dependent on and oriented toward Daniel 7:13, but it also has a formal independence. Jesus deliberately avoided the Messiah title because it has a nationalistic meaning to the Jews. The seldom used title of Son of Man gives him space to input new meaning. This also explains why Daniel does not directly use Messiah to refer to the Son of Man in his vision. Jesus combined the suffering servant and Son of Man together. These two apparently contradictory tasks are united perfectly in his ministry.

In Gospels, Jesus were busy healing people and casting out demons. The diseases and demon-possession are both physical suffer and spiritual symbolic. But there are still some people, like the Syrophoenician woman, who long to be forgiven and restored.

Christianity believes that man is created by God in his own image. Calvin said in all of God's work, man is the most noble and outstanding sample of God's justice, wisdom, and goodness. However, after Adam and Eve ate the forbidden fruit, instead of resembling God, they looked like livestock and began to feel humiliated. From that day on, people lived a life like an animal. Jesus Christ came to the world to re-adjust people's original status. When he was tempted, he stood in the position of a man. Just as God closed the lion's mouth and saved his servant Daniel, God also kept his beloved son from the beasts. Jesus strengthened his position and said to Satan: Man does not live on bread alone, but on every word that comes out from the mouth of God.

When God created Adam, he made Adam smaller than angels, but higher than all things. God, man, and everything form a vertical relationship. God makes people multiply, so there is another horizontal relationship between people. Among these two relationships, the former is more important than the latter.

The ancient Chinese did not stress this vertical relationship, only the horizontal, which is the ethical and moral relationship that Confucianism

emphasized.¹ On the other hand, the principle of materialism is that people are next to me, God is below me, and things are above me. So, materialists simply do not understand human dignity, human value, and human status before God.

Historically, Chinese people's lives are full of misery. We suffered 25 dynasty changes and 15 population extinctions to produce the emperors. The communist China is no different from the previous dynasties in terms of the system, except that the ruling philosophy has changed from Confucianism to Communism.

Although the ruling concept has changed, China's cultural influence for more than three thousand years is extremely strong, and it is on this basis that Communism can take root and sprout.

Confucianism established a strict social hierarchy for China. Daoism shaped the way of thinking of Chinese people. Buddhism has allowed people to be satisfied with their current living conditions and hope in the afterlife. Folk religions have provided a self-satisfying religion and form a part of traditional Chinese culture.

Except Buddhism, Confucianism, Daoism, and folk religions all start from the concept of heaven. In general, belief in heaven is the real belief of the Chinese. But this heaven is a kind of supernatural power, not the God of Christianity. On the contrary, the emperor represents heaven on the ground. Therefore, people put their

1. Stephen Tong, *Between God and Man* (Taipei: Campus Evangelical Fellowship, 1992), 27.

faith in the ruling class.

In a turbulent social environment, the individual's strength is too weak, although it has entered 21st century, family system is still the factor to stabilize Chinese society. Since ancient times, Chinese people care more about their own families than other people's life and social issue. For regular Chinese people, being alive is their bottom line, and endurance is the basic living skill. A simple life is the pursuit of most people. When making choices and judgments, profit is regarded as the top principle to maintain their family security. In the family system, nobody should be unique, and sameness is good for every members' interests.

Chinese people used to worship the ruler as heaven, but the fact is they have been oppressed by the ruler for thousands of years, which leaves room for the Chinese to accept materialism and atheism.

Today's Chinese society is more complicated and contradictory than the ancient societies. Materialism is the world outlook of modern Chinese, socialism is the basic system of Chinese society, and various religions are interpreted as feudal superstitions. But one of the human instincts is to pursue faith, so self-deification and narrow patriotism form a major trend in modern Chinese society.

Under such complex circumstances, the value of humans should be emphasized in the Chinese church. If we do not have a clear understanding of God, people, and the relationship between them, just changing the social system will not

help much.

The intention of God's revelation of the Son of Man is much bigger than the humble and suffering servant. It reminds us of the union of God and man, and the noble roots of mankind. First, Chinese people should not underestimate the value of their lives and existence because of their large population. Second, respect for each other should not be empty talk. We Chinese must examine our own cultural traditions, abandon narrow nationalism, accept the gospel of the universal God, and train ourselves to be the people of God who retain our own uniqueness.

In God's kingdom, all distinctions of race, color, and nationality have been removed. People can maintain their identity and diversity and worship the same God. If God can come into this world as a human being, why do we despise our essence as a human? If God is such a gentle, humble, and kind person when he was in the world, why should we be arrogant? Thanks be to the LORD! Glory be to the LORD!

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